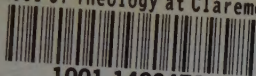


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ST. MARY THE VIRGIN, OXFORD
IN ITS RELATION TO
ENGLISH HISTORY
H. L. THOMPSON

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THE CHURCH OF ST. MARY THE VIRGIN

OXFORD

IN ITS RELATION TO SOME FAMOUS
EVENTS OF ENGLISH HISTORY

BY THE
REV. HENRY L. THOMPSON, M.A.

VICAR OF THE PARISH
EXAMINING CHAPLAIN TO THE BISHOPS OF LICHFIELD AND BANGOR
SOMETIME STUDENT AND CENSOR OF CHRIST CHURCH, OXFORD
AND SELECT PREACHER

WESTMINSTER

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PREFACE

WHEN in 1901 the writer of this volume undertook for the second time the office of Select Preacher before the University of Oxford, it occurred to him that he would not be wrong in avoiding the more usual theological topics, and choosing as the subject of the few sermons which might be expected to fall to the holder of his office the connection of the famous church of which he was vicar with some of the more memorable events of English, or at least of Oxford history. The present book contains seven sermons, together with an Introduction. Of the sermons, four were preached before the University; the first and sixth before the Mayor and Corporation, who have been accustomed of late years to attend the University Church on some Sunday before the beginning of the academical year; a graceful act on their part,

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expressive of the cordial relations which now happily exist between the civic and the academic authorities. The seventh sermon has not been preached, it being hardly suitable for the congregation of an ordinary parish service, the only opportunity for its delivery.

The writer lays no claim to originality. He has simply tried his best to make use of all accessible materials, and to describe as faithfully as possible some of the stirring incidents which are inseparably connected with the University Church. It is scarcely necessary to add that of modern writers Dr. Rashdall and Sir H. Maxwell Lyte must needs be constantly consulted by any one who attempts to treat of mediæval Oxford; and that no one would be bold enough to write about St. Mary's church without continual recourse to the invaluable monographs of the late Mr. Ffoulkes and of Mr. T. G. Jackson, R.A.

ST. MARY HALL, OXFORD,
November 1903.

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INTRODUCTION

No one who enters the church of St. Mary the Virgin, Oxford, can fail to be struck by the unusual arrangement of the interior. It is singularly ill adapted for parish services. The spacious chancel is separated from the rest of the church, and almost hidden from view, by a heavy stone screen, surmounted by the organ. The nave is fitted up, not for the common worship of an ordinary congregation, but as a meeting place of the University, where that body attends in its corporate capacity, as it has attended for several centuries, for the purpose of hearing sermons. All traditional ceremonies are still observed to make this fact clear. On every Sunday morning, during full Term, the great bell of St. Mary's (the 'campana magna' of the University statutes) tolls forth its sum-

mons to Academic Oxford, and at the proper hour there enters the nave, from the side chapel, a dignified procession of the University authorities. The bedels of the four faculties of Arts, Medicine, Law, and Divinity, lead the way, carrying their gilt or silver staves. Then in the proper costume of his degree follows the official head of the University, the Vice-Chancellor, accompanied by the preacher of the day, who is conducted by the bedel of divinity to the pulpit. The doctors of the several faculties walk next in order, attired in their richly-coloured habits. Next come the two proctors, the representatives of the masters of Arts, wearing the white hoods of their office, and they are followed by such heads of Colleges as are not the possessors of a doctor's degree, and are yet allowed a certain precedence accorded to their high position. Meanwhile the other masters of Arts have taken their allotted places in the body of the church. The galleries are assigned to the undergraduates, and the bachelors of Arts, though technically still 'in statu pupillari,' are permitted, by a

courtesy extended to them since 1828, to occupy places in close proximity to the masters. The Vice-Chancellor proceeds to his throne opposite the pulpit; the doctors range themselves on either side of him; the proctors are seated in stalls just below the doctors, but above the benches of the masters. The building is in fact being used as a house of Convocation; the University is in formal session for the transaction of a particular business.

In this interesting gathering may be traced the chief survival of the use by the University of St. Mary's church as its common home, where all its corporate acts were once performed, where all its business, secular as well as sacred, was transacted. In a few other ways, indeed, its hold over the church is still maintained. At the beginning of each Academical term, the Holy Communion is celebrated within its chancel in Latin, not by the vicar of the parish, but by the Vice-Chancellor or his deputy; the Latin litany is sung by one of the proctors or a minister appointed by him, and a Latin sermon is

preached. The Judges of Assize are received at St. Mary's by the Vice-Chancellor, to hear the sermon which accompanies the opening of the Commission. And sometimes, on the occasion of a great public rejoicing or public sorrow, the University exercises the right of assembling for a common act of worship in its ancient home; thus it met on the day of Queen Victoria's funeral; and from time to time its illustrious dead are brought within St. Mary's, to be honoured by a special service before they are laid to rest in the modern extra-mural cemetery.

And yet, in spite of this freely claimed and freely accorded use of the church by the University, the rights which it possesses over St. Mary's have never been exactly defined; their origin has never been clearly traced. But the parish has never grudged—nay, it has always proudly welcomed—the ancient and customary use of the building by the University; although its parochial can boast of a far higher antiquity than its academical associations.

For indeed there has existed a church of St. Mary the Virgin from Saxon times, occupying the site of the present edifice, standing near the centre of the ancient city, in a conspicuous position in the street which has always formed the main thoroughfare from the east to the west gate. The parish has always been small in area, but its antiquity is shewn when the bounds are beaten each year on Ascension day, for its limits are found to comprise portions of no fewer than six colleges, besides the great quadrangle of the ancient schools, a part of the Bodleian library, half of the Clarendon building, and the whole of the square in which the Radcliffe library stands. The previously existing parish was invaded by these comparatively recent settlers; narrow lanes and crowded tenements and market-stalls gave place to halls and colleges and libraries. Cat street ('vicus murilegorum'), one of the main thoroughfares of the parish, still survives, though now containing no private residences, under the more imposing though probably less accurate name of Catharine Street, but 'kitten' court, one

of the many lateral alleys which opened out of it, has long ceased to exist.

Here then stood St. Mary's church, in the centre of its little parish in the heart of Oxford, long before any University existed. To the Saxon edifice succeeded a more spacious building erected in the twelfth century, to which the present tower and spire were added at the close of the thirteenth century. The Lady chapel, or as it is more usually called, Adam de Brome's chapel, was added soon afterwards in the reign of Edward II., and about the same time there was built in the churchyard the now most venerable Congregation House, with the original University library above it. The present church, as its architecture plainly shows, dates from the latter half of the fifteenth and the earliest years of the sixteenth century; the Lady chapel and the tower and spire survive from the earlier church. The south-west porch, with its curious intermixture of classical and Gothic features, was the work of Nicholas Stone, the designer of the beautiful Stonehouse monument at Radley. It

was erected in 1637, during the Chancellorship of Archbishop Laud, at the cost of his chaplain Dr. Morgan Owen, three years later Bishop of Llandaff. It will be remembered that when Laud was impeached, one of the charges preferred against him was that he had suffered the erection of 'a very scandalous statue of the Virgin Mary, with Christ in her arms, set up in front of the new church porch of St. Mary's next the street,' to which, Alderman Nixon affirmed, he saw one bow and another pray.

The sermons contained in the present volume will illustrate some of the uses to which St. Mary's church was put during the progress of the centuries, as the central home of the University. But it may be worth while for the sake of clearness to describe them briefly now. The twelfth century almost certainly marks that beginning of student life in Oxford which gradually assumed the form of a University. And the body of teachers and learners who gathered here from all parts of Europe, bound together by the common quest of knowledge and

the use of the Latin tongue, possessed no central building in which they could meet for the discussion and transaction of such business as their growing corporate life involved. The church of St. Mary's supplied the want. It stood in the very middle of the schools and halls where the scholars lodged and studied, and listened to the instruction of their teachers. It was large, and convenient and open to them. Without any formal grant and without any ousting of the parishioners, they became its joint tenants with them. And their business whether sacred or secular was transacted within its walls, without any sense of incongruity. The use of consecrated buildings for secular purposes was not uncommon in the middle ages, and the distinction between secular and religious studies was not then sharply drawn. Theology, '*mater scientiarum*,' occupied the highest place, supreme over all other studies, and to the proper understanding of its profound truths all other studies were intended to contribute their share. The Arts course consisted of seven divisions. First were

the three elementary subjects, the 'Trivium' as they were called, of Grammar, Rhetoric and Logic. Then came the four more advanced subjects, the 'Quadrivium,' of Arithmetic, Geometry, Music, and Astronomy. The seven were summed up in the mnemonic line,

'Lingua, tropus, ratio, numerus, tonus, angulus, astra.'

All of these were subordinate and preparatory to the studies of the higher faculties and particularly to Theology. Thus, for instance, Grammar was studied that the holy Scriptures and the commentaries upon them might be read without difficulty and copied without blunders; through Rhetoric and Logic, the arguments of the Fathers might be mastered, and erroneous doctrines refuted; Music was useful for due rendering of the services of the Church, and so on. There was therefore no incongruity in associating all the studies and lectures and all the business of a body so engaged, with the consecrated building of a church. And thus St. Mary's, while retaining its parochial character and ministering

through its vicar to the spiritual wants of the parishioners, was also in constant use by the University. Here masses were said by the chaplain, and sermons preached. Here the many and various exercises which preceded the attainment of a degree were performed. Here degrees were formally granted and conferred. It was also the house of legislature, where matters affecting the University were debated and enacted as statutes. It was also the theatre, where the public acts were performed, and the annual commemoration of founders and benefactors took place. Within its walls the Chancellor or his deputy held his court, and exercised his peculiar jurisdiction. Before his tribunal were brought almost all cases in which scholars or any who possessed the privilege of clergy were concerned. The jurisdiction was very wide, and related to all sorts of matters pertaining to the daily well-being of the University, such as the quality and price of bread, wine, beer, and other provisions, the rents of houses let to clerks, or the cleaning and repair of the streets.

Matters of police also were here dealt with, brawls in the streets were punished, and offenders committed to gaol in Bocardo; in short, the whole administration of justice, except in certain specially heinous offences, was carried on in St. Mary's, whenever it concerned members of the University. Even heads of colleges were sometimes brought before this tribunal and convicted and sentenced for grave misdeeds. St. Mary's was also the bank or treasury of the University, where the various chests were kept which contained the revenue received from fees and fines and other sources, as well as the endowments of benefactors for the help of poor and struggling scholars. Here too, in the library above the Congregation House, was the one public reading room, in which the treasures of learning were placed at the disposal of the diligent student.

One other use of St. Mary's should be mentioned, arising out of its close connection, since Edward the second's reign, with Oriel College. Adam de Brome was almoner to that

king, and also held the rectory of St. Mary's. In 1324 he established a society to which he gave the name of 'The House of the Scholars of St. Mary in Oxford.' A year later he surrendered his foundation to the king, that it might be reconstituted as a royal foundation. Adam de Brome was then named its first Provost, and the rectory of St. Mary's formed part of its original endowment. Thus the benefice has belonged, since that distant time, to Oriel College, and that society has always been under the obligation of maintaining the fabric of the church, and of providing a vicar for the performance of the parochial services. But the new foundation had no chapel of its own, as indeed was the case with all the earliest collegiate foundations in Oxford; and just as Merton College occupied the parish church of St. John the Baptist for its chapel, Balliol College the church of St. Mary Magdalen, and Queen's College that of St. Peter in the East, so Oriel College made use of St. Mary's. Thither its members resorted every Sunday and festival,

and they sat in the chancel robed in surplices. The provost occupied his seat of dignity, and the special masses for the founder were there celebrated by one of the college chaplains. It was not till about fifty years after its foundation that Oriel College possessed a chapel of its own. And within St. Mary's many of its provosts have been buried, and even now the hatchment of the last deceased provost is placed by custom on the wall of Adam de Brome's chapel.

From the facts which have been briefly mentioned, one may fairly claim for St. Mary the Virgin's church a quite exceptional and indeed a unique position among the churches not only of Oxford but of England, or even of Europe, and its annals deserve attentive study, which they will amply repay. St. Mary's connects itself with all the great religious and spiritual movements which have touched our national life, that national life which Oxford has so profoundly influenced.

And perhaps it is not a merely fanciful conjecture that would discover in some of the

features of the architecture of the church a desire on the part of the builders to impress upon the minds of Oxford men in successive generations certain ideal aims which should animate a great Christian university. As the eye is turned to the lofty tower and spire completed six centuries ago, one cannot help noticing the twelve sculptured figures which stand in the niches of the great pinnacles that are grouped at the base of the spire itself. Much uncertainty will always exist as to the persons intended to be represented by several of these statues; but as to some of them there is no doubt at all. Among the figures facing north is the statue of St. Cuthbert, holding in his hand the head of the Christian king, St. Oswald, who perished in attempting to wrest East Anglia from the heathen Penda's sway, and whose head, rescued from his mutilated remains, was placed, after many wanderings, in St. Cuthbert's coffin. It is possible that the choice of the famous saint of Northumbria to be placed on the tower of St. Mary's was

immediately due to the recent foundation by William of Durham of the hall, which was afterwards known as University College, and which, if it possessed in the thirteenth century any buildings of its own, was situated in School street, on the north-west side of the church, close beneath St. Cuthbert's statue. But another reason may be fairly suggested. Cuthbert and Oswald teach for all time the power of the saintly life. It is told of Oswald that 'by reason of his constant habit of praying and giving thanks to the Lord he was wont whenever he sat to hold his hands upturned on his knees.' Before his first battle he 'set up a cross of wood as his standard, holding it with his own hands till the hollow in which it was fixed was filled in by his soldiers; then throwing himself on his knees, he cried to his host to pray to the living God.' This was the prelude to a career of victory; and the test of submission to his sovereignty was found in the embracing by the conquered of the Christian faith. Through his protection Aidan was encouraged to make Lin-

disfarne the centre of his missionary work, and Birinus, though representing the Gallic church, planted his see at the royal city of Dorchester, where the Isis and the Thame join their waters. And Cuthbert, the shepherd boy of Lammermoor, the recluse of Farne, the reluctant Bishop of Hexham and of Lindisfarne, the most renowned saint of northern England, typifies the union of study and austerity, the abiding power of simple holiness; and the figure of the rigid ascetic, to whose shrine no woman was suffered to approach, would agree well with the celibate traditions of mediæval Oxford.

St. Cuthbert faces northwards, towards distant Durham. And northwards also, towards his cathedral church of Lincoln, faces one of the figures on the north-east pinnacle, St. Hugh of Avalon. His usual emblem can be seen, the wild swan from the marsh of Stowe, nestling in the folds of his robes, with neck and head upturned to his caressing hand. In Hugh, the Carthusian monk, whom Henry II. summoned to England, first to set in order the monastery of

Witham, and then to rule over the immense see of Lincoln, of which Oxford formed a tiny portion, one may recognise the welcome which a university accords to men of every nation; and by the example of the brave prelate to whose outspoken rebukes three English kings listened submissively, there is taught the lesson of that courage which is an essential characteristic, in every age, of the loyal preacher of divine truth.

St. Cuthbert and St. Hugh stand also as representing the two main sources of English Christianity, that which sprang from the Irish settlement at Iona, and that which came from the Latin church. Both these saints indeed were monks, and the monastic ideal never touched Oxford very deeply. But on the eastern side of St. Mary's tower, facing towards Canterbury, stands a figure of an archbishop, with mitre, pallium and crozier. It is placed in a niche enriched with special ornament. The gabled canopy is adorned with ten mitred heads of bishops, and angels blowing trumpets surmount the gargoyles at the corners. The

gurgoyles themselves represent armed figures with drawn swords. There is little doubt that the statue so highly honoured is that of Becket, and that the grotesques at the side are the armed knights who slew him. Becket stands as the secular churchman, who rose by one step from the almost lay position of the diaconate to the primacy of England, and who claimed for the Church liberty and independence against the aggressions of king and nobles, a liberty and independence which, in thought and action, the clerks of Oxford have always jealously cherished.

One more prelate, a primate of the thirteenth century, may also possibly be identified among the statues on the tower. It is Edmund Rich, the Abingdon boy, who one day as a lad entered a church in Oxford (almost certainly St. Mary's), and after kneeling in prayer before a statue of the Virgin, placed a ring upon its finger, and dedicated himself, with whole-hearted devotion, to the service of St. Mary, whom he thus took for his bride. Rich spent many years at Oxford, and affords an example of a life consecrated not

only to holiness but also to learning. He was an untiring and enthusiastic student, the first, it is said, to read the logic of Aristotle in Oxford. He was a generous and even thriftless teacher, who would carelessly fling down on his dusty shelf the pence which his scholars paid him at his lecture, crying out 'ashes to ashes, dust to dust.' And as he surrendered himself to the service of his heavenly bride, so in generation after generation have young men given themselves up to the service of their Lord and Master, in the pursuit of 'knowledge and true godliness'; and from the thoughts and prayers and aspirations which have been associated with St. Mary's, and with the all too short Oxford life, have passed into the busy world of action, strong to maintain, through the years of conflict, purity and simplicity and faithfulness to their early vows.

One more statue tells its message. It is the figure of Walter of Merton, placed on the southern side of the tower, looking across to Merton College. He was the founder of the

first college in Oxford; the originator of a conception of student life which has stamped itself into the very heart of our academic ideal.

So through the sculptured figures of its tower, St. Mary's connects the present with the far distant past. And there is one bit of ritual still observed in its services, which has come down from the pre-reformation church, one knows not from what date. On the first Sunday of each month, at the mid-day celebration of Holy Communion—it has been found inconvenient to retain the custom on other occasions—the desks of the stalls on both sides of the chancel are draped in white 'houseling' cloths of fine linen. The communicants do not move to the altar railings to receive the sacred food, but the elements are brought round to them by the minister, as they kneel in their places. This custom is perhaps alluded to by Keble in the *Christian Year*:

'Sweet awful hour! the only sound
One gentle footstep gliding round,
Offering by turns on Jesus' part
The Cross to every hand and heart.'

It is possible that the practice of remaining in the stalls is of a later, and perhaps Puritan origin; but the use of the 'houselings' may undoubtedly be claimed as a survival of the ancient ritual of mediæval times.

Another relic of the past, though later in date by two hundred years than the statues of the tower, may still be seen in the interior of the church. Above the southern archway of the tower there is fixed a portion of a stone pulpit, on which are engraved the arms of Warham (impaling the see of Canterbury), of Fitzjames, Bishop of London, and of Audley, Bishop of Salisbury. The pulpit, of which this fragment survives, was a gift made to the new church of St. Mary's in the year 1508. Fitzjames and Audley were two of the donors, and Archbishop Warham was Chancellor of the University at the time. The structure was wholly of carved stone, and it occupied the position of the present pulpit, beneath the figure of the angel whose outstretched hands seem to invoke a blessing on the preacher. It probably remained intact

till the time of the Commonwealth, when, during the Vice-Chancellorship of Dean Owen, it was removed, with the exception of the base and lower cornice, of which the existing fragments formed a part, and on which a wooden pulpit was placed. This gave way, in the reign of Charles II., to a moveable pulpit of wood, which survived till 1827, when the present structure was erected.

The name of Warham recalls the sympathy and friendship extended to Erasmus by the kindly patron of the new learning, who yet foresaw not the mighty changes which were so near at hand, as intellectual and spiritual freedom asserted their claims and widened their bounds. From the stone pulpit of St. Mary's Peter Martyr was to deliver his testimony, and Cole was to send Cranmer to the stake. As the centuries have passed, St. Mary's has been the theatre for the exposition of each successive movement of English theology, for the hot discussion of each bitter controversy, for the condemnation and tardy acceptance of

each novelty in doctrine or practice. And even the present pulpit has its famous memories. Here John Keble delivered the testimony which marked the beginning of the Oxford movement. Here Newman's afternoon sermons were preached. And still, amid the distractions of modern Oxford, the living voice of our foremost teachers makes itself heard within St. Mary's, and is accorded a respectful and even eager attention. The sermon still exercises a real power over the intellect and the heart of those who care for serious things; and no one who enters the church on a Sunday evening during the Term, and sees the whole building tightly packed with a throng of undergraduates, brought together under no compulsion or persuasion, listening intently to the words of some earnest preacher who has won their confidence and is in touch with their thoughts and aspirations, can doubt that St. Mary's still retains its ancient and traditional power, as the true centre of Christian Oxford.

SERMON I

THE BEGINNINGS OF OXFORD

‘A citizen of no mean city.’—ACTS xxi. 39.

WE are accustomed to speak of the ‘ancient’ University of Oxford, and to boast, not without ample justification for so doing, of its long life, dating from many centuries back. Yet on an occasion like the present, when the civic authorities attend the University church, and are received within its walls with all befitting respect and ceremony, it may not be amiss to recall the well-known but sometimes forgotten fact, that the municipal life of Oxford is of far higher antiquity than its academical life, that the town had arisen and grown and prospered long before any concourse of scholars, or any renowned teachers, made the place a home of study and learning. Academical Oxford prob-

ably did not begin to exist till early in the twelfth century, though by the close of that century its reputation as a place of learning was already established throughout Europe. But the municipal life of Oxford can be clearly traced back to a very much earlier epoch, and although the title of 'city' was only legally assigned to it in the instrument by which Henry VIII. reconstituted the see of Oxford at Christ Church in 1546, yet it is called by the name of 'civitas' even as early as in the Domesday Book.

It was undoubtedly a place of importance in Saxon times, and the great mound by the castle, thrown up by Edward the elder early in the tenth century, was intended to guard the valley of the Isis and the settlement on its banks from the encroachments of the Danes. One needs indeed but to walk to Carfax and ascend the tower which still survives to mark the situation of the central church and gathering-place of the freemen of the ancient community, and the reason for the selection of the site is clearly seen.

The ground slopes in all directions from this its highest point, a hill of gravel rising just above the once swampy river beds of Isis and Cherwell. To the south was a ford with sound footing, which provided a comparatively easy passage for traffic across the main stream, and the Isis was a waterway of great importance between London and central England. The early settlers were protected from danger not only by the rising ground on which their huts were built, but also by the intricate net-work of streams on every side, and the place soon came to possess a strategic as well as a commercial importance. It stood on the borderland of the rival kingdoms of Wessex and Mercia, and of the conflicts between Saxons and Danes many grim memories have gathered round it.

It must have been early in the life of the Saxon settlement that the first religious community was planted hard by, for in the eighth century St. Frideswide placed her church and humble conventual buildings somewhat lower on the hill slope, and nearer the margin of

the stream. The dimensions of the original church may still be traced, and one is glad to believe that learning and study and devotion found their first tranquil home in Oxford upon the spot where Christ Church now stands.

After the Norman conquest Oxford rapidly grew in importance. Its position had already made it the meeting-place of more than one historical assembly: but now with the Normans came that influx of craftsmen and traders which quickened and augmented the prosperity of the towns throughout England, while the strong hand of the new rulers enforced the unwonted blessings of order and peace. The Thames valley was secured by the erection of castles at Windsor, Wallingford, and Oxford: one can still see the great tower which was built here by Robert d'Oilli, and can trace the wide extent of the bailey and the circuit of the city walls which were constructed under his guidance. So our city grew and prospered. It was a place of political importance. It became a royal residence, and in the palace of Beaumont, erected

by Henry I., just beyond the walls near the north gate, were born two English kings, Richard I. and John. The Augustinian Priory of Oseney, which afterwards became one of the most splendid of English abbeys, was founded in the same reign, beyond the west gate. Henry I. and Henry II. bestowed charters on the now wealthy and influential community. The latter king confirmed to the burgesses many important rights and privileges, some of which must obviously have belonged to them in times before the conquest. The same charter granted them such privileges as were possessed by the citizens of London, including the right to attend, in the person of their chief magistrate, and to share the duties of chief butler, at the Coronation banquet. The church of the citizens was St. Martin's at Carfax, in the very centre of their town; in its churchyard the Town Council met; on the bench against its eastern wall justice was dispensed by the civic authorities. The privileged markets were held in the main streets running in four directions from Carfax; and the citizens

enjoyed definite and valuable rights over their spacious 'ager publicus,' Port meadow.

It need scarcely be added that to this prosperous and busy city settlements of Jews soon attached themselves. Aliens in Oxford as elsewhere, they lived within the precincts of their Jewries, the chief of which lay in St. Edward's parish near Bear Lane. Their burial ground was near Milham ford, on the site of the present Botanical Gardens. The Jews were always an element of trouble to city and university alike.

It was to this already populous and wealthy trading community that the Academical Oxford joined itself in the twelfth century. I will not now trace its beginning and growth:—it will be enough to say that as the scholars quickly increased in numbers, the university assumed an importance of its own, became famous as a centre of learning, and attracted students and teachers from all European countries. So gradually within the walls of Oxford there came to exist two distinct and rival communities, and through the lack of any strong central authority, occasion

was continually given for serious feuds and grave disorders. The relations between city and university were never really cordial. The university brought, it is true, much wealth to the town, whose traders supplied its multifarious wants; yet there was no subserviency on the part of the townsmen, but a sturdy spirit of independence prevailed; and although the members of the university, before the costly edifices of their colleges were built, could punish the town by deserting Oxford for a while for some other and less intractable home, still the city would not be its servant, by the sacrifice or endangering of any of its privileges or liberties. Quite early in the annals of the university a murderous onslaught of the citizens resulted in the hanging a number of the scholars, and the rest left the turbulent place, dispersing to Reading, Maidstone, and Cambridge. But the most famous, and for the citizens the most disastrous of all the conflicts occurred on St. Scholastica's day, February 10, 1354.

It began with a tavern brawl. Some scholars

were drinking in the Mermaid inn at Carfax, and complained to the vintner of the quality of the wine provided. Words led to blows, and the quarrel grew as others joined in it. Then the bell of St. Martin's was rung, and the citizens quickly assembled, armed with bows and arrows and other weapons, and began to attack the unarmed scholars in the streets. The Chancellor attempted to make peace, but he was shot at by the townsmen. He accordingly caused St. Mary's bell to be rung, and the scholars, doubtless with all alacrity, flew to arms. They brought out bows and arrows, and a fight continued till night-fall, though no mortal injuries were thus far inflicted.

Next day, the Chancellor thought it wise to interpose in the interests of peace. He caused a proclamation to be made against the bearing of arms or the committing of any breach of the peace. This was given out at St. Mary's and at Carfax. But the townsmen would not listen or obey. They attacked some scholars while peaceably engaged in the schools, and others

walking in St. Giles' fields, without the walls, were shot at. One of them was fatally wounded, and others were driven into the Augustinian priory or into the town. Meanwhile the country folk had been summoned to assist the town against the university. Then the bells rang out again, and the fight grew hot, till at last after vespers two thousand countrymen entered by the west gate, and the scholars were forced to withdraw to their lodgings. During the night many hostels were broken into and plundered, and several scholars were killed. The next day the pillage went on, and fourteen inns or halls were ravaged, and outrages of all sorts were committed. The scholars seem to have offered little resistance, the bulk of them having taken flight. The total number of those actually killed is not certainly known: it was probably not less than forty members of the university.

Condign punishment quickly followed this outrageous violence. The Bishop of Lincoln at once issued sentence of excommunication against the citizens, and Edward III. appointed

a royal Commission to inquire into the whole affair. The result was that, after university and city had both journeyed to London and made due submission to the Council, heavy penalties were inflicted on the city, and great gain accrued to the university. To the latter body was granted an ample charter, by which many privileges were either confirmed or for the first time bestowed. Among these privileges were the custody of the assize of bread, wine, and ale, the supervision of weights and measures, the right to seize food bad in quality or deficient in weight, and the guardianship of the streets. The Mayor was imprisoned for two years; the city was to pay to the university two hundred and fifty pounds in compensation for the damage done, and to restore the goods pillaged from the scholars. Meanwhile the Bishop's excommunication remained in force, and it was not wholly withdrawn till 1357; and then a humiliating ceremony was imposed upon the city, which inflicted a lasting indignity. The Corporation of Oxford was enjoined to provide for an annual

service in St. Mary's church on St. Scholastica's day, for the benefit of the souls of the clerks and others killed in the conflict. The Mayor, the two bailiffs, and three score of the chiefest burghers were to attend the church yearly on that day, 'and there at their own charges celebrate a mass, with a deacon and sub-deacon, for the souls of the said scholars that were slain.' They were to be present during the whole of the mass, and after the reading of the Gospel each was to offer one penny at the altar, 'of which oblation forty pence shall presently after be distributed to forty poor scholars of the university by the hands of the proctors, and the residue of the oblation shall be given to the curate of St. Mary's church.' A yearly fine of one hundred marks was to be paid by the corporation if they failed in this attendance at St. Mary's. It may be added, that, according to one account, the mayor was to appear at the service with a halter round his neck, an indignity which was afterwards symbolised by his wearing a silken cord.

This degrading ceremony appears to have been performed without interruption till the Reformation. In Elizabeth's reign it was intermitted for fifteen years, and the university then pressed for payment of the fine thus incurred, amounting to fifteen hundred marks. The citizens pleaded in defence that the mass which had been enjoined upon them was contrary to law, and could not be performed. Weight was allowed to this plea, and a suggestion was made by the Council that a 'sermon or communion' should take the place of the mass. And so a service of some sort was continued, from which the citizens were not released till 1825, in which year, more than four centuries and a half since the penance was first imposed, a formal Act of Convocation abolished the whole ceremony.

The incident which I have narrated takes back our thoughts to the middle of the fourteenth century. The Oxford of that distant time must have indeed provided a strange and animated picture, in the union within its pre-

cincts of very various and very incongruous elements. The scene has been well described by the anonymous writer of a brilliant and singularly interesting article in the *Quarterly Review* for January 1892 :

‘Within the walls of the city—in the narrow, ill-paved, dirty streets which, overhung by signs, wound through rows of tall, irregularly-built houses, whose stories rose one above and beyond the other, like inverted staircases, till they almost excluded the light of day—were herded together a motley throng, over which neither chancellor nor mayor, had they worked in harmony, could exercise any control. The rough upland folks occupied the centre of the streets with their carts and strings of pack-horses. At the sides crowded citizens in every dress, plying their various trades, chaffering with the manciples, but always keeping their bow-strings taut, ready to promote a riot by pelting a scholar with offal from the butcher’s stall, prompt to draw their knives at a moment’s notice. Here moved to and fro among the shops

and stalls, Jews in their yellow gaberdines; black Benedictines and white Cistercians; friars, black, white, and grey; men-at-arms from the castle; flocks of lads of twelve to fourteen, who had entered some grammar school or religious house to pass the first stage of the university course. Here passed a group of ragged, gaunt, yellow-visaged sophisters, returning peacefully from lectures to their inns, but with their "bastards" or daggers, as well as their leather pouches, at their waists. Here a knot of students, fantastically attired in many-coloured garments, whose tonsure was the only sign of their clerkly character, wearing beards, long hair, furred cloaks, and shoes chequered with red and green, paraded the thoroughfare, heated with wine from the feast of some determining bachelor. Here a line of servants carrying the books of scholars or of doctors to the schools, or there a procession of colleagues escorting to the grave the body of some master, and bearing before the corpse a silver cross, threaded the throng. Here hurried a bachelor in his cape; a regent master in his

heelless shoes or "pynsons," a scholar of Exeter in his black boots, a full-fledged master, with his tunic closely fastened about the middle by a belt, and wearing round his shoulders a black, sleeveless, close gown. Here gleamed a mantle of crimson cloth, symbolising the blood of the Saviour, or the budge-edged hood of a doctor of law or of theology, for it was then an object of ambition to wear, not to evade, the academical dress. In the hubbub of voices which proceeded from this miscellaneous, parti-coloured mob, might be distinguished every accent, every language, and every dialect. A mediæval university was essentially cosmopolitan, and the influx of foreigners into Oxford was very great, especially when the university of Paris was temporarily dispersed, and when the Franciscan schools were at the height of their reputation. Frenchmen, Germans, Spaniards, jostled in the streets against English, Irish, Scotch, and Welsh; Kentish students mingled with students from Somerset or Yorkshire, and the speech of each was unintelligible to the other. National

hostilities, clan hatreds, local jealousies, intellectual antipathies, differences of blood, language and race, contributed to the heterogeneous character of the university. Men of the same nationality, province, or county, congregated together, advanced under their distinguishing banners to the fray, and in celebrations of the festivals of their own patron saints found more fruitful occasions of brawling than in football or cudgel-playing.'

I have ventured to quote this description of mediæval Oxford, which is probably new to many of my hearers, not only for its remarkable power and vividness, but also because it serves to remind us how ancient and how rich is that heritage which university and city happily share in a great measure at the present time, when on the civic body are many representatives of academical Oxford, who take their full part in administering local affairs for the common advantage of all. Each needs the co-operation of the other. The citizens must necessarily exercise a preponderating influence

not only in the pecuniary matters which concern the university very closely, but on all questions which relate to our material well-being. And surely it is with a clear and reverent recollection of the august past which belongs to both, that our common life should now be led, our policy framed, our local laws administered. Each should act in all respects on the ancient and honourable maxim of '*noblesse oblige*.' There should be mutual confidence and mutual generosity, based on our own common share in a glorious past, as much as in the common tasks and duties of the busy present. And Oxford, which belongs to both, and of which both are so justly proud, should never again be parted into hostile camps, should never again exhibit that unhappy bifurcation into 'town and gown,' which has been the cause of so many ancient jealousies, and suspicions, and wrongs.

SERMON II

THE FRIARS

‘In the beloved city he gave me rest, and in Jerusalem was my power. And I took root in an honourable people, even in the portion of the Lord’s inheritance.’—ECCLES. xxiv. 11, 12.

ON November 30, 1312, an interesting and stirring scene was witnessed at St. Mary’s church at Oxford. A general Congregation of regent and non-regent Masters was being held in the chancel, under the presidency of the Chancellor, Henry de Maunsfield, a doctor of Divinity, and some time fellow of the still recent foundation of Merton College. While it was engaged in business, Lawrence of Warwick, a friar of the Dominican order, entered the church and approached the chancel. He came as proctor for the prior and convent of the Dominicans in Oxford, and his object was to

serve notice of appeal to the apostolic see against the recent acts of the university authorities concerning the treatment of the preaching friars in the matter of their academical degrees. He was accompanied by a notary, and other persons as witnesses. But he met with an unexpected, or at least with an unpleasant, reception. No sooner did he begin to read his official document than some Masters of Arts interrupted him; the notary was turned out straightway, and was soon followed by Lawrence and his companions, who were hustled out of the sacred building without his being allowed to read the document that he had prepared. The friar with his friends, amid a crowd which had speedily assembled, as crowds do, moved along the south side of the exterior of the church till he reached a point opposite the chancel. Then he mounted on a tombstone, which commanded, through an open window, a near view of the interior where the Congregation was still transacting business, and through the window he shouted his notice of appeal, adding a few words of invective and

rebuke. Then he descended from his lofty station, and passing through the crowd to the door, which after his exit had been closed against him, affixed to it a copy of the appeal. He did so amid the execrations of the bystanders, scholars, servants, and the like folk. 'It is monstrous,' they shouted, 'to give alms to such fellows as you. You deserve to have your doors shut, and yourselves to be burned, you who dare in your impudence to lodge an appeal against the acts of this reverend Congregation of distinguished men.'

I need scarcely say, in passing, that this curious scene was not enacted in the present church, but in that earlier St. Mary's, of which a few fragments alone remain. It was a long and somewhat low building, erected in that transition period of English architecture when the round was giving way to the pointed arch, and it had just at this time been ennobled by the completion of the still existing tower and spire.

It was not the first time that Friar Lawrence

had met with a cold reception when bent on a like errand. Nine months before he had attempted to serve a notice on the Chancellor in his school, but had been prevented from entering. He waited outside till the lecture was over, and then, as the Chancellor passed out, he thrust the document into the folds of his gown, but only to see it thrown away, with rough gesture and indignant words.

I have ventured to remind you of this remarkable incident for two reasons. First, because of the evidence which it affords of the close connection of St. Mary's church with the business, secular as well as sacred, of the university, and secondly, because it is an illustration of the relations which subsisted between the authorities of the university and the friars, who had in the thirteenth century established themselves in Oxford, and had already acquired a strong position and considerable influence there. And I trust it will not be deemed inappropriate if the vicar of St. Mary's, when honoured with the appointment to the post of select preacher,

should be guided—in the selection of subjects for such sermons as he may have the opportunity of preaching—by the recollection of some of those historical incidents which show the close relation of the church, of which he is for the time the parson, to the academical life of Oxford; and which illustrate the attitude of our great university to the different religious movements which at various epochs have deeply affected it, and through it have exercised an influence over the whole Church, and the whole intellectual as well as spiritual growth of our country.

The scene which I have tried to recall to your memory took place in the sixth year of Edward II. It is not easy to throw back the mind to that distant time, and to call up a picture of Oxford life as it then existed. At that date only three of the existing colleges had been founded, and indeed the endowments of William of Durham, and of John of Balliol and his wife Devorguilla of royal lineage, had not yet assumed a permanent character, with that self-government and established position

which are usually held to constitute a college. In the foundation of Walter of Merton—under its statutes of 1274—is found the first real college of Oxford, as well defined by Bishop Hobhouse, that is to say, ‘an incorporated body of secular students, endowed with all the attributes of the great corporations of regulars, self-support, self-government, self-replenishment, settled locally in connection with a great seat of study.’

The colleges then were only just being founded. The bulk of the Oxford students lived in hired apartments, or in the many separate halls or hostels which, though under the nominal government of graduates, were little more than boarding houses. It was a cosmopolitan assemblage of scholars of many nations, united by the common pursuit of learning, and gradually acquiring a constitution and laws and privileges which gave it a corporate life, and a recognised authority as to instruction and discipline and the licensing of teachers. St. Mary’s church was its central home, its one gathering-place for

secular or sacred purposes; there were no university buildings; even the now venerable and alas! neglected Congregation House, which lies sheltered under the shadow of our chancel, was not erected till about 1320. The university was thus not yet closely tied by costly and beautiful homes to the fair city on the banks of the Isis; its students were free to move elsewhere, if caprice or passion so disposed them.

Nor did the university stand in any close relation to the monastic foundations which had already settled at Oxford. Of these the most opulent and stately was the Augustinian abbey of Oseney, but it lay in isolation beyond the western limit of the city. St. Frideswide's—at this time held by canons regular of St. Augustine—had indeed for a long period the custody of the University chest, but this was probably all; the Benedictines had no settlement till they planted their colonies of students at Gloucester and Durham Colleges.

But with the advent of the friars in the

thirteenth century there was introduced into academical Oxford a new and important element. Strange intruders as they were, alien in aims to the secular scholars, they met with a more generous reception than might have been expected; the trouble which they were to cause later was not foreseen. The Dominicans were the first to settle, almost immediately after their arrival in England in 1221, and they were closely followed by the Franciscans. Before the end of the century the Carmelites, Augustinians, Friars of the sack, and the Trinitarians, had all established themselves in Oxford.

One likes to recall the story of the first approach of the Franciscans to this city. Obscured as it is by legendary details, it well illustrates the strangeness of their apparition, and the contrast between them and the older orders. Their little band—according to one account Agnellus of Pisa himself (their first Provincial) and three companions—had walked from Canterbury, and had nearly reached their journey's end. But the last day of their travel was

declining, the floods were out around them, they were hungry and wayworn. Somewhere near Baldon, as they were passing through a wood, they lighted on a small grange of the neighbouring Benedictine abbey of Abingdon. They ventured to knock at the door, and ask 'as the Lord's servants' for due hospitality, 'lest they should perish from hunger and the wild beasts of the forest.' The porter received them, but was puzzled at their looks, so he summoned the prior, who came to the door accompanied by the sacrist and cellarer, and one young novice. They inspected the belated intruders, but startled by their strange appearance, their naked feet and coarse serge gowns fastened with knotted cords, they judged them to be not 'the Lord's servants' but profane mummers, and drove them out into the night with reproaches. The novice, pitiful and unsuspecting as youth should always be, was touched by their sad plight, so he bade the porter to send the poor wayfarers to the hayloft, promising that when his hard-hearted seniors were gone to bed, he would himself supply their

wants. Then he crept out, when opportunity offered, and brought them bread and beer, and asked their prayers. He then left them and went to his cell to sleep. And in the stillness of the night he dreamed, and lo! Christ sat on His judgment throne, and the prior and the sacrist and the cellarer were brought before Him, and a friar told of the breach of hospitality, and the stern sentence was delivered, that they should be hung on the elm which grew in the cloister. The dream found its fulfilment in the morning by the discovery of the sudden death of the three culprits, and the novice hastened into Abingdon to report the marvellous news to the abbot.

But the churlish prior of the country grange was no fair representative of English hospitality. Just as the Primate, Stephen Langton, had given a cordial welcome to the friars of both orders on their arrival in England, so did they meet with a kindly and friendly reception on settling in Oxford. This may well be a matter for surprise, for both orders had been founded, as is well

known, for objects which, it might be thought, bore no relation to the studies or interests of a university. They were under the direct patronage of the Pope, to whose unwavering support, at first granted with reluctance, they owed their strong position. The Dominicans, arising in an age when preaching had declined, and the Albigensian heresy was threatening Catholic truth, proclaimed the old faith of the Church in its rigid orthodoxy, at a time when the new learning, free inquiry, and keen intellectual activity had already made the universities objects of suspicion, and it would have been only natural that these 'stern apostles of unswerving orthodoxy,' as Dean Milman call them, should be regarded as most uncongenial visitors. At first indeed the Dominicans took for their ostensible task the conversion of the Jews, and obtained a settlement in the Jewry in St. Edward's parish, but they soon moved to their permanent quarters by the south gate, on an island between the main waters of the Isis and the Trill Mill stream, still to be identified in

Black Friars Road. The Franciscan settlement was in the same district, between Littlegate and the Castle, and their garden orchard probably survives in the name of Paradise Square. This order too, had been founded for objects most remote from academical interests, for their first care was to perform works of charity among the feeblest and most helpless of the poor and sick who were sheltered in the meanest quarters of the city and suburbs. Mendicants in a very literal sense, the Franciscans, who ultimately acquired a far stronger position in England than the Dominicans, were under the strictest obligation not to own even a single book. When a novice importuned St. Francis to allow him at least to have a psalter of his own that he might learn to read the psalms correctly, the answer was, 'When you have got a psalter, then you'll want a breviary, and when you have got a breviary, you will sit in your chair as great as a lord, and you will say to your brother, "Friar, fetch me my breviary."' And then, placing ashes on his head, and rubbing them

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with his hand, he kept repeating 'Ego breviarium, ego breviarium,' till the novice was confounded, and ceased to make his request.

And yet these two religious orders, so distant, it would seem, in aims and duties, and in their whole conception of life, from the secular scholars who thronged the schools of Oxford, soon acquired a very influential position not only throughout England, but in our university. It was inevitable that the austere rules of their founders should be relaxed. Their sterling merits soon brought them great popularity; their numbers quickly grew; their ministrations were eagerly sought, riches and dignities were pressed upon them. It will be remembered that the quarrel of the avaricious Boniface VIII. with the Franciscans turned on his refusal to relax the statute of their order which forbade them to hold land or other property. Each order soon had its spacious church, and ample monastic quarters, and well-furnished library. Grostête, the first patron of the Franciscans in Oxford, left to them a number of valuable books, which

formed the beginning of a large collection. In no long time the Oxford friaries became homes to which the more intellectual students from other convents of their order were sent to be trained in Theology and Canon Law, after the example of the older monastic bodies. They had their own schools and their own lecturers, but were diligent in attendance at the lectures of the best teachers in the academical schools. 'They were so fervent,' writes Thomas of Eccleston of the early Franciscans, 'in hearing the divine law and scholastic exercises, that they hesitated not to go every day to the schools of Theology, however distant, barefoot, in bitter cold and deep mud.'

It was not only among the poor that they were held in exceptional honour. Kings and nobles sought them as confidential advisers. Henry III., Edward I. and Edward II. had friars for their confessors; one of the two proctors whom Devorguilla appointed to administer her endowment for scholars was a Franciscan, Hugh de Hertipol, whom she probably selected

by the advice of her own confessor, another friar of the same order, Robert de Slikebourne. Scarcely half a century had passed since the death of the two founders when a Dominican friar, Robert Kilwardby, became Archbishop of Canterbury, to be followed in St. Augustine's chair by John Peckham, a Franciscan, and the Papacy was at the same date held for the first time by a friar, Nicholas IV., General of the Franciscan order. More remarkable still were the great schoolmen who belonged to their ranks at this early time. Thomas Aquinas had joined the Dominicans about the middle of the thirteenth century, when he was still a youth, against the earnest entreaties of his kinsfolk. Albertus Magnus was attracted to the same order when he was well advanced in years. To the Franciscans in the same century belonged the famous teachers at Paris, Alexander of Hales (*Doctor Irrefragabilis*), a Gloucestershire priest, and Bonaventura (*Doctor Seraphicus*), who died at the Council of Lyons in 1274, as a Bishop and a Cardinal, and most worthy, in the opinion

of his contemporaries, of the papal throne. More nearly connected with the order in Oxford were Duns Scotus, who died a comparatively young man in 1308, and William of Occam, his contemporary. The learning of Roger Bacon—certainly one of the most remarkable Englishmen of the thirteenth century—cannot fairly be credited, as it so often is, to the Franciscans, for he entered their cloister by the advice of Grostête, when he was already disappointed of his hopes and had spent all his estate on scientific research. It should be added that the encouragement to publish his still famous treatises came not from the members of his order, who gave no help or sympathy, but from Pope Clement iv.

The names of these mighty men indicate the twofold direction in which the studies of the friars were turned. On the one hand theological learning was needed for their primary task of preaching; the mysteries of the faith must be justified to educated, and not only to uninstructed hearers; theology must rest on a firm basis of philosophy. Grostête urged the

Oxford Franciscans to study, and impressed upon them the special need of applying themselves to theology, 'or else,' said he, 'for a certainty the same lot will befall you as has befallen all other religious men, who are walking to their shame in the darkness of ignorance.' On the other hand, the works of mercy among the sick needed the medical knowledge which could come only from the study of nature. 'With the friars,' writes Mr. Brewer, 'came the first systematic attention to medical studies and to natural philosophy in general. There is scarcely a writer of eminence among them, distinguished as he may be for logical and metaphysical ability, who is not equally interested in experimental philosophy.'

Shakespeare's unerring genius has painted for ever this part of the friar's life. We all remember the scene in *Romeo and Juliet*, where Friar Laurence came forth from his cell at early dawn to cull simples:

'I must up-fill this osier cage of ours
With baleful weeds and precious-juiced flowers.

The earth, that's nature's mother, is her tomb ;
What is her burying grave that is her womb,
And from her womb children of divers kind
We sucking on her natural bosom find,
Many for many virtues excellent,
None but for some, and yet all different.

Within the infant rind of this small flower
Poison hath residence, and medicine power :
For this, being smelt, with that part cheers each part ;
Being tasted, slays all senses with the heart.'

The potion which Juliet drinks is of his providing. And when the message to Romeo miscarries, it is because Friar John has gone to seek his barefoot brother while visiting the plague-stricken folk, and they were both detained.

'The searchers of the town,
Suspecting that we both were in a house
Where the infectious pestilence did reign,
Seal'd up the doors, and would not let us forth ;
So that my speed to Mantua there was stay'd.'

The friendly relations between the university and the friars were not of very long duration. The details of the dispute in which the episode

of Lawrence of Warwick occurred are scattered over many years, and are not very easily understood. The friars as they grew and prospered chafed at the restrictions to which degrees in Theology were subject, while the secular masters were inclined to add to their strictness. The rules of the orders precluded them from taking the degree in Arts, but this degree had come to be regarded by the university authorities as an essential preliminary to graduation in the higher faculties, and a statute passed in 1252 had asserted its necessity. The generous use of a dispensing power had for a time warded off the difficulty; but a grace could at any time be refused on the opposition of a single master of Arts, and the degree involved an oath of obedience to the statutes, including the new and obnoxious one. Moreover there were certain exercises called 'vespers' preparatory to the theological degree, which they had for long been accustomed to perform in their own schools, but were now to perform in St. Mary's: in which church also were to be preached the

examinatory sermons which preceded the same degree.

The controversy had many stages. We read of an ineffectual interference of the King, and of an appeal of both parties to the Pope, involving a long, expensive, and profitless journey. Then an arrangement was made for the hearing of the whole matter in England before a board of commissioners, and in 1314 their award was confirmed by Royal Letters Patent.

The arbitration resulted on the whole in favour of the university. The necessity of qualifying in the Arts course as a condition precedent to graduating in Theology was affirmed: the exercises for the latter degree were to be performed in St. Mary's, though it was conceded that every Bachelor of Divinity should preach one sermon in the Dominican church before proceeding to his doctorate. Rules were also laid down to prevent an arbitrary use of the veto by masters of Arts; and the principle of voting by faculties, and deciding questions by a majority of faculties,

was formally established, and was from henceforth a recognised custom which can still be traced in our procedure.

The whole controversy suggests some considerations which are of more than transitory value. It is interesting (to notice quite a minor point) to observe the importance attached by the friars to having their exercises performed in their own churches and not in St. Mary's. St. Mary's, they allege, was distant, and noisy, and lacked the tranquillity so necessary for religious exercises, which their own quiet churches provided. One calls to mind the fact that it is only quite recently that the Dean and Canons of Christ Church (the successors of the Canons Regular of St. Frideswide's) have given up—except on three great holy-days—their ancient right of preaching before the university in their own cathedral church. It was a right which has more than once been contested, and which the university never regarded with favour. In 1674 the matter was so hotly disputed that the interposition of the Sovereign was invoked

to settle it. The Vice-Chancellor and Proctors and Heads of Houses, after quoting the statutes of the university on their side, complained of the distance of Christ Church from most of the colleges, the bad acoustic properties of the cathedral, the ill accommodation in the seats, and the difficulty of hearing the bell.

The controversy with the friars provides an early instance of the competition between general and special education; and the insistence by the university on the requirement of the Arts degree as a preliminary to proceeding in the higher faculties, illustrates a principle for which we still have to contend, in days when each special study tries to win independence for itself from the general requirements of the earlier examination in the Arts course. 'To the mind of the secular academic,' writes Dr. Rashdall, 'the study of Philosophy was an essential preliminary to that of Theology; even when he applied himself to the study of Theology he was disposed to attach more importance to the sentences than to the Bible, and to apply to

the doctrine of the Holy Trinity, or to the psychology of angelical beings, the philosophical distinctions in which he had revelled as an artist. The secular masters of Arts were not disposed either to allow Theology to be approached without adequate instruction in Philosophy, or to permit that instruction to be given to any but authorised masters of their own faculty.' Under this lies a great and important principle of academical education. As the friars were welcomed to Oxford, so has this university generously welcomed all who come to its bosom, recognising in all clients who claim a place at the seat of learning, applicants for a share in the stores which it is ever ready to dispense. But it must make its own terms with the new comers. Its treasures are not for every one to grasp, without method, guidance, or regulation. In due sequence they are to be approached, and used, and enjoyed. The richer treasures of the higher faculties need, for their full appreciation, experience of the general studies of the faculty of Arts: above all, Theology, the

mother and the crown of sciences, cannot be scientifically studied apart from its proper groundwork in Philosophy.

We are confronted in these days with the ever-increasing difficulty of filling up the ranks of the clergy: and among the remedies for curing the evil arising from the meagre supply of candidates for Holy Orders is that of lessening the requirements of the examiners: and indeed, through Theological colleges, many men are now admitted into Holy Orders who have enjoyed the smallest possible amount of general training. Such a concession may be inevitable, and men of this stamp will often make useful clergymen so far as parochial ministrations go: but the Oxford hood is still a hall-mark. It is still a certificate of a certain amount of general, as distinct from special and professional training, even if it means far less than it formerly meant. And it is, perhaps, worth while to learn a lesson from the attitude of our university in the fourteenth century, and to press still—in the interests of Theology itself—for

the enforcement of such conditions as can alone preserve its distinction and enhance its dignity.

In the rise of the mendicant orders there was witnessed a genuine outburst of a fervent religious spirit, directed with no selfish aims, in complete and humble self-dedication, by men of true holiness, inspired with exalted and unworldly ideals. Dominic and Francis arose in an age when the older monastic orders, which had never attempted to touch the masses of the population, had, at least in this country, sunk into uselessness. The secular priests were steeped in ignorance, unable to preach to their flocks, or to exercise over them any real spiritual influence. The superior clergy were largely employed in affairs of state — were laymen rather than clerics.

Into the social life of the thirteenth century the friars came as a new regenerative force, a fresh inspiration; they were in the world, yet not of it; in touch with the people, with a close intimacy which was an unknown experi-

ence; the teachers of divine truth, the relievers of bodily distress; the setters forth of a pattern of Christian service, of faith working by love, among the neglected multitudes to whom the Gospel of Christ had never been thus made known.

And so, in spite of the many and various elements of discord which such an awakening inevitably created, their work grew and prospered, their number and their influence increased with almost incredible rapidity. But the seeds of decay were there: and the too frequent tragedy of history was soon to be repeated in the swift decadence of the mendicant orders, in their fall from a lofty spiritual height, in the corruption by the world of the forces which were sent out to conquer it.

A century and a half almost exactly marks the interval between the death of St. Francis and the death of John Wyclif, the most famous opponent of the mendicants, and an incident which occurred at St. Mary's church about a century after that which I have described

to-day brings into prominence one of the closing scenes of a conflict between the forces of reform and free thought and the stubborn orthodoxy of the authorities of the mediæval church.

Of this I hope to speak on a future occasion.

SERMON III

JOHN WYCLIF

‘Why dost thou preach my laws, and takest my covenant in thy mouth; whereas thou hatest to be reformed: and hast cast my words behind thee?’—Ps. l. 16, 17.

IN my last sermon I tried to describe an incident which took place in St. Mary’s church at the beginning of the fourteenth century. It served to show the uses to which the church was put as the one home which the university occupied for its public business, whether religious or secular; and it illustrated the relations of the mendicant orders then settled in Oxford to the academical authorities. To-day I desire to call your attention to another curious incident which occurred about a century later in the same building.

In 1411, Thomas Arundel, Archbishop of Canterbury, gave formal notice of his intention

to hold a visitation of the university of Oxford. He issued his citation, admonishing the Chancellor, doctors, masters, and scholars, and all others belonging to the university, to appear before him. In due course he left Lambeth, travelling in befitting state, with a numerous retinue of distinguished persons, among them being his nephew, the Earl of Arundel. But as he drew near to Oxford, he was met by the Chancellor, Richard Courtenay, and the two proctors, John Byrche of Oriel College, and Benedict Brent of Exeter College. They assured him of a cordial welcome, if his visit was that of a guest who desired hospitality; they would gladly yield him all due respect and courtesy. But they were obliged, they added, to refuse to recognise his authority, if he claimed to come officially, to hold a visitation. They alleged that for many years the university had held itself to be exempt from the visitations of Archbishops or Bishops, and they quoted a Bull of Boniface IX. as granting to them freedom from the jurisdiction of the episcopate. The protest

of the Chancellor and proctors was backed by ruder measures. The Archbishop heard their remonstrance, and then moved on, up the High street, to St. Mary's; but on arriving there, he found the building barred against him, and a band of scholars, armed with swords and bows and arrows, ready to defend the church against his entrance. Arundel did not attempt to reduce the academical fortress held by so threatening a garrison, but he promptly laid the church under an interdict. The proctors, however, paid no heed to this action; by their orders the doors were opened, when the Archbishop had passed on, the bells were rung, and the mass was celebrated as usual.

Arundel was not a man to submit tamely to such a defiance of his office. He appealed to the King for support, and Henry iv. was naturally on his side. The proctors, it would seem, were arrested and imprisoned in the Tower. The masters, in retaliation, suspended their lectures; the scholars began to disperse to their homes; the whole life of the university was interrupted.

The intervention of the Prince of Wales (Prince Hal) brought about a settlement of the dispute; the Archbishop was persuaded to have pity upon the imprisoned proctors, and to sanction their release; but the undergraduates, who had encountered the Primate with armed resistance, were to meet with a punishment befitting their years, a good chastisement *virga et ferula*. The Bull of Boniface IX. was adjudged prejudicial to the Crown; but while the Sovereign was declared to be the proper visitor, the Archbishop was allowed to have authority to inquire into matters of heresy.

The whole incident formed the closing scene, or rather the epilogue, of a drama which began some years before, and of which I desire to speak briefly this morning. The object of Arundel's visitation had been to crush the errors still prevalent at Oxford connected with the teaching of Wyclif, against which he had already moved when holding a Provincial Council at Oxford in 1407. An inquiry which he had set on foot two years before had disclosed no fewer than two

hundred and sixty-seven heresies or mistakes in the writings of that famous man. These the Pope, at Arundel's request, formally condemned. To a further request, that Wyclif's body should be exhumed and cast on a dunghill, the Pope demurred: and it was not till some years later, when the persecution of the Lollards had reached its full severity, that the odious vengeance ordered by the Council of Constance was inflicted. In 1428 the Pope enjoined Richard Fleming, Bishop of Lincoln, to commit the outrage; after resting for forty-four years in the quiet grave at Lutterworth, Wyclif's remains were dug up and burnt, and cast into the little river Swift: 'but the Swift,' writes a well-known divine, 'bore them to the Avon, that to the Severn, the Severn to the sea, to be dispersed unto all lands: which things are an allegory.'

Arundel himself stands out among the ecclesiastics of his time as a person of no little distinction. Like Courtenay, his predecessor in St. Augustine's chair, he owed his high position not to eminent learning or piety, but to noble birth

and family interest. Both of these prelates had royal blood in their veins. Both were men of high principles, clear convictions, strong and imperious will, and unblemished orthodoxy. They were not enthusiasts, and regarded their duties in relation to the preservation of Catholic doctrine as a matter rather of policy than of spiritual concern. Arundel's career had been singularly eventful. He had been connected with Oxford for a short time when a lad, as a member of Oriel College; and in after life he showed much kindness to that foundation, in spite of the strong and turbulent adherence of some of its members to the extreme party of ecclesiastical reformers. The legends on the windows of the first college chapel at Oriel told of its erection by his father and himself about the year 1379, in the early years of his episcopate. At a much later period his generous help enabled the college to close the dispute with the university relating to Bishop Cobham's library. His rise was rapid, for at the age of twenty-one he was already Archdeacon of Taunton, and a year later

Bishop of Ely, through that convenient system of Papal administration which has enabled the see of Rome so often to defy public sentiment, and even common decency. Gregory XI., who had himself been made a cardinal at the age of seventeen, was not likely to object on the ground of immaturity of age to the promotion of a youth closely allied to the House of Lancaster. Arundel was consecrated by Archbishop Whittlesey, now in broken health, in the chapel of his manor house at Otford; the ford where the pilgrims' way from Southampton to Canterbury crosses the Darent. It was a delightful residence, and may still be seen, standing in its meadows, guarding the narrow opening through which the Darent—some ten miles from its source in the hanging woods of Squerryes—flows northwards between the high chalk downs; its current increased at this point by the health-giving waters of the spring which burst forth, so legend tells, at the magic touch of the staff of Thomas à Becket. This, it may be added, was the only consecration which Whittlesey per-

formed during the six years of his primacy. Arundel had been twice Chancellor under Richard II. From Ely he went to York, and from York to Canterbury; the first instance of such a translation. Then he had been banished the kingdom, to return, after many secret intrigues, with Bolingbroke, and to be partner of his fortunes from the first landing at the now lost and forgotten Ravenspur. He had come back to resume his position as Primate, and before the close of his life was to take his prominent part in the persecution of the Lollards, and to witness the practical working of the infamous statute *De haeretico comburendo*.

His presence at Oxford on the occasion which I have described was caused, as we have seen, by the prevalence there of the heresies connected with the name of Wyclif.

We rightly boast of John Wyclif as one of the greatest of our Oxford men; yet he is a somewhat shadowy figure, and it is not easy to determine how much can be quite certainly known about him. He suffers from the intrusion

of another shadowy form, one John Wyclif of Mayfield, who is a rival claimant for the Wardenship of Canterbury Hall, and for his rooms at Merton, if not also at Queen's College. His name is spelt in nearly thirty different ways. His birth is only conjecturally assigned to the year 1324: and it was not till five centuries later that his birthplace was finally and completely identified. The first certain date is 1361, when, being then past middle age, he was Master or Warden of Balliol College. Thence he passes to the Balliol living of Fillingham, and his course from this time till his death at Lutterworth in 1384 can be more or less definitely traced, and all the most famous events of his life are compressed within that period, and indeed within the last half of it. Of his personal appearance we only know that he was thin and emaciated in frame. The portraits which we possess have no authority; that which is prefixed to Vaughan's memoir, and is attributed to Antonio More (nearly two centuries later than Wyclif), exhibits a dignity and grace consistent

with the tradition that he was most guileless in speech, and won the affection of all who conversed with him. To the voluminous writings which are undoubtedly from his pen there have been attached many of questionable authenticity; even his personal share in the translation of the Bible, which more than anything else has been the foundation of his lasting fame and influence, is not easily decided.

He left no permanent school of disciples behind him, for the Lollards were not his true followers—they represented his principles exaggerated, distorted, and misapplied: his russet-clad priests preached for a time, but only in part of England: his immediate influence—deep and genuine as it was—impressed itself far more really on continental than on English theology: the deaths at Constance of Huss and Jerome of Prague burnt his teaching into men's hearts with an ineffaceable mark. As a Reformer he was before his age; and many generations had to pass before the principles embodied in his writings and teaching bore their legitimate

fruit. 'Teutonic Christianity,' writes Dean Milman, 'had to wait more than two centuries and a half before it offered a new system of doctrine to the religious necessities of men. Lutheranism, Anglicanism, Calvinism, are forms of faith; from Wycliffism it would be difficult, perhaps impossible, to frame a creed like that of Augsburg, articles like those of the Church of England, or even those of Westminster.'

Wyclif is first known at Oxford as a learned theologian: a doctor, teaching in his school, and preaching from time to time in St. Mary's: a schoolman, famed for his knowledge of Aristotle (in Latin), skilled in dialectic, and so well versed in the Latin Scriptures as to receive the title of *Doctor Evangelicus*. He was a typical example of the choicest product of a mediæval university: he represented not only its learning, but its intellectual liberty, the freedom accorded to its instructors to speak out boldly what they thought. From the central thesis of his teaching, the doctrine of 'dominion founded in grace,' came those alarming deductions which forced

him into antagonism with the hierarchical system. It was a doctrine which logically led to communism; it was incompatible with Papal sovereignty, with the feudal lordship of the prelates, with the wealth of the clergy. 'It belongeth not to Christ's Vicar nor to Priests of Holy Church to have rents here on earth.' There was need of drastic changes. The monks and canons—possessioners, he calls them—were idle and self-indulgent, absorbing and squandering wealth. 'These irreligious that have possessions, they have commonly red and fat cheeks, and great bellies.' The friars were especially denounced, as exhibiting the failure of an especially noble type of service, the *corruptio optimi*.

It was assuredly a swift decay that had come upon the mendicant orders, as they had mingled among the multitudes, to perform tasks which, as originally conceived, were truly Christlike. In the universities, indeed, the learned members of these bodies maintained a high position and unsullied reputation: it was in the wandering

friars that the degradation of their orders was so soon visible. From holy men, who travelled from place to place with the Gospel blessing, their frugal wants supplied by the willing alms of the faithful, they became a horde of sturdy beggars, hypocrites, and impostors: confessors and preachers on the one hand; pedlars, gossips, boon companions on the other; plying a trade with their sacred offices, agents of the Pope in the selling of pardons and indulgences. The pictures drawn in the pages of Chaucer and Langland are undoubtedly truthful, and they show the deep corruption which had spread through the rank and file of the mendicants within a century or a century and a half from the death of their founders: the contempt in which they were held, the injury which they inflicted on spiritual religion.

Wyclif's academical position, and his reputation as an authority against the Papal usurpations, led to his employment more than once by the Crown: the most important occasion being John of Gaunt's mission to Bruges in

1374, in company with Sudbury (then Bishop of London) and others, to discuss with the Papal Legate certain grievances connected with the Pope's exercise of patronage. It is worth while to recall the intimate relations which existed between Chaucer and John of Gaunt, and it may well have been that in friendly meetings at his court Wyclif, Chaucer, and Sudbury fostered their liberal and enlightened views as to the current abuses in the Church. For Sudbury, though obliged, when Archbishop, to act against Wyclif and to censure his opinions, had much in common with him, and must have felt some such compunction as prelates in our own day have felt in condemning opinions to which, in earlier and unofficial days, they have been themselves strongly attracted. Perhaps it was this same influence which led to Sudbury's cold treatment of the pilgrims whom he met on their way to Canterbury for the fourth jubilee of St. Thomas, and who knelt down and asked for his blessing. Instead of complying with their request, he warned them in stern language

that they were only wasting time and money in seeking a plenary indulgence at the martyr's shrine, which would be absolutely valueless, except on their true repentance. 'Why, Lord Bishop,' answered one Thomas of Andover, 'do you dare to stir up the people against St. Thomas? At the risk of my life I tell thee that thou shalt end thy days by a foul death.' The prophecy found its literal fulfilment.

The scenes which show the relations between Wyclif and the university are chiefly connected with William Courtenay, who succeeded Sudbury as Bishop of London and as Primate. Courtenay had no liking for liberty of thought. It was his business to maintain orthodoxy and to crush unsound opinions, especially when associated with the anti-Church policy of John of Gaunt. In 1377 Wyclif was residing for a time with John of Gaunt at his palace of the Savoy, and preaching in the churches of London against the endowments of the clergy and other standing abuses of the Church. He thus found himself for a time within the jurisdiction of the Bishop

of London, who cited him to appear before Sudbury as his Metropolitan, and himself as his Ordinary, at St. Paul's, to answer certain charges of heresy.

He came in reply to the citation: but with him came John of Gaunt himself, and Lord Percy, the Earl Marshal, father of Harry Hotspur. Attended by a great retinue, they forced their way, in the dawn of a February morning, into the already crowded court in the Lady chapel. Their behaviour roused the indignation of the Londoners there assembled. The Earl Marshal tried to issue orders, as though he were Lord Mayor, and bade Wyclif be seated, telling him 'he had many things to answer for, and therefore had need of a soft seat for so long a session.' But the Bishop of London, 'cast eftsoones into a fumish chafe with these words'—as the old narrative has it—answered that he should not sit there, for, says he, 'it is neither according to law nor reason that he who was cited here to answer before his Ordinary should sit down before the time of his answer.' An

angry altercation followed. The Duke of Lancaster muttered that, rather than take what the Bishop said at his hands, he would 'pluck him by the hair of his head out of the church.' But the threatening attitude of the Londoners warned him to be cautious. He left the church, with the Earl Marshal, amid the menaces of the citizens, and was barely able to retreat in safety to the Savoy. Nothing more came of the trial, so far as Wyclif was concerned, except that he thus received an emphatic hint not to associate himself with a political party.

But soon came the interference of the Pope, in answer to an appeal from monks and friars that the Bishops should be urged and commanded to extirpate the heresies and crush their author. The insurrection of Wat Tyler and the murder of Archbishop Sudbury showed to what lengths a popular movement might be carried, and that movement was associated most unfairly in the minds of the lovers of order with the teaching of Wyclif. Oxford, which had up to now been loyal to him, and had shown him the sympathy

always extended to learning, began to fall away, alarmed not only at the later developments of his teaching, which questioned the doctrine of transubstantiation, but also at the consequences which seemed to follow from his doctrines. Whatever liberty might be accorded to the schoolman and divine, there was now that taint of political extravagance attaching to his writings, which caused hesitation and alarm among his friends. In the summer of 1381, and almost at the time of Sudbury's murder (which occurred on June 14), William Berton, the Chancellor, pronounced a formal sentence of censure on Wyclif's opinions, in which twelve doctors concurred. The sentence was promulgated in his presence in the school of the Austin Friars, and led to his temporary withdrawal from the university.

Then Courtenay—now Archbishop—took the matter up in earnest. Twenty-four articles, full of extreme statements concerning the Eucharist, the priesthood, the property of the clergy, the friars, and other matters, were

extracted from his writings, and submitted to a Council of divines held in the Chapter House of the Black Friars in London, in May, 1382. This Council—called the Earthquake Council, from an alarming earthquake which happened during its session—declared nine of Wyclif's conclusions to be heretical, and fifteen erroneous. The Archbishop applied to Parliament for a measure which would enable the secular officers to arrest the preachers of such doctrines, and the first Act of Parliament for the suppression of heresy by force was then passed. Yet Wyclif himself was left untouched.

But how was Courtenay to deal with the university of Oxford? The transient movement under Berton had ceased: Wyclif's tenets were again taught and honoured in Oxford. At the Earthquake Council, two prominent residents, Dr. Nicholas Hereford and Mr. Philip Repyngton, had been pronounced contumacious for refusing to disown his doctrines, and the Chancellor, Dr. Rygge, though more compliant, was known to favour the same heresies. Courtenay

therefore determined to deal promptly with the university. He did not himself come down to Oxford, but chose as his Commissioner a certain Dr. Peter Stokes, Professor of Theology in the House of the Carmelites here. His letter to Stokes, dated from Otford, May 28, 1382, may still be read. It enumerates the twenty-four heretical or erroneous theses, and Stokes is charged to prohibit the teaching of them within the university. Courtenay was doubtless unwise in his choice of a representative. A friar would not be a popular ambassador to the seculars of Oxford, and Stokes was a nervous and timid man, whose fears could easily be played on.

He presented his mandate : but the Chancellor, Dr. Rygge, at once answered that the Metropolitan had no jurisdiction in Oxford, even in the case of heresy ; that he was attacking the rights, liberties, and immunities of the university. Stokes, however, was allowed to proceed : probably it was thought that he would be sure to blunder in his mission, and that the popular feeling against him among the Academicians

would render all he did abortive. A body of armed men carrying swords was assembled: the mayor was summoned to assist. On Corpus Christi day a violent sermon was preached before the university in the cloister green of St. Frideswide's by Philip Repyngton; on entering the church afterwards it was noticed that the preacher was attended by twenty scholars, with arms beneath their gowns. The poor friar, Peter Stokes, was terribly afraid, and durst not go forth: he was the more disturbed to see the Chancellor waiting at the door for Repyngton to come out, and having a good laugh with him at the fright into which they had thrown the Archbishop's commissary. Then followed a disputation—probably in St. Mary's—between Repyngton and Stokes. The former was listened to attentively, the latter met with contumely; and again was Stokes alarmed by the sight of twelve armed scholars in the building. He was in mortal terror. '*Tantum timuit Petrus armatos, quod credidit mortem imminere ante descensum de cathedra.*'

Courtenay saw through the whole matter, and was determined not to be beaten by the tricks played on his timid representative. On receiving Stokes' report, he ordered him to return at once to Lambeth. He obeyed with alacrity, spending the long summer hours of St. Barnabas' day on his journey to London. Then the Chancellor, fearing lest he had gone too far, hastened himself to Lambeth to try to make his peace; but Courtenay would not receive him privately, but bade him wait and appear before a Council. He was then condemned for contempt, and he had not the courage of his opinion when confronted with the resolute Primate. He made his submission on his knees, and took back with him to Oxford another mandate, enjoining him to protect those in the university who were on the side of orthodoxy, and to forbid Wyclif's doctrines to be taught or held. Moreover, he was ordered to search Colleges and Halls for suspected persons: but this he declared he could only do on peril of his life.

He was a weak and vacillating man, and when

he was back among his friends, who received the publication of the mandate with a storm of indignation, he temporised, pleaded that he had not promised to condemn the Wycliffites, but only to disavow some of their tenets; and plucking up courage he pronounced sentence of suspension against one Henry Crumpe, for calling the Wycliffites heretics.

But Courtenay had no intention of being worsted in the struggle. He invoked the authority of the Crown, and a Royal Brief soon reached Oxford, commanding compliance with the injunctions already issued. In a second Brief the King warned the Chancellor and proctors that Crumpe had lodged a complaint against them for his suspension. The Chancellor was ordered to resign his office, and the university authorities were peremptorily enjoined to assist in the search for heretics.

The Royal mandate could not be resisted, though it was a clear infringement of the liberties of Oxford. Hereford and Repyngton were suspended by an act of the university:

they appealed to Courtenay, who heard, but only to condemn them. Others were now delated, but most of them recanted their errors, and orthodoxy for the moment triumphed completely. Then Courtenay himself came to the humbled university: he held there a Convocation of his province, and received many submissions; and though Wyclif himself was probably not present, his doctrines were explained in such a way as to enable him to remain unharmed at Lutterworth, where he died peacefully within three years.

But the snake was scotched, not killed. Grave as was the disaster to the cause of religious reform and intellectual freedom, the episode which I have described at the beginning of to-day's sermon shows how hard a task Arundel had in dealing with the same opinions, which were again prevalent and strong within a very few years after Courtenay's victorious campaign.

Moreover it will be remembered that it was from Richard Fleming's experiences of the propagation of the erroneous doctrines in the first

decade of the fifteenth century (he had been Proctor in 1407, four years before Arundel's attempted visitation, and had then been a favourer of the new opinions) that he founded his college of Lincoln in 1429, to train up scholars in the orthodox faith, that they might combat this pernicious teaching, especially in questions relating to the Holy Eucharist and the doctrine of purgatory.

With the subsequent history of the movement I cannot now deal. Lollardism in the fifteenth century was a grim and bewildering tragedy, and its action moved far away from Oxford into the wider life of England. It had its wild political and communistic elements, shown in opposition to the wealth and power of nobles and clergy, and its better religious elements of stubborn puritanism. Persecution led to the exaggeration of both these elements; but the latter had the stronger vital force. All through the century that followed there flowed a hidden stream of religious opinion hostile to the dominant Church, and doubtless in many a squire's house and

many a country parsonage copies of Wyclif's version of the Scriptures were carefully treasured and diligently studied.

The Reformation of the sixteenth century did not indeed spring from this source: its leaders knew little of these obscure and lowly sectaries. But yet, as Mr. Capes observes, 'the ground had been prepared at home by many an unknown hand; the old fabric of ceremonial formalism and superstition had been undermined; disruptive influences had grown more intense because so forcibly repressed; and in the later stages of the long movement of reform the underground forces which had been working silently showed themselves at last without disguise, and the Church had cause to rue in bitter earnest the stern intolerance of her summary treatment of dissent in earlier days.'

Let me in conclusion add one observation. The attitude of Oxford to the new teaching was exceedingly characteristic of that academic temper of which we are rightly proud.

There was the generous welcome to the

learned teacher who offered his own fresh contribution to the search for truth; there was welcome while he taught even strange doctrines conflicting perhaps with the accepted and orthodox creed, but not on that account to find no hearing or to elicit no sympathy. But when deductions, rough and ready, were made from Wyclif's theses, deductions which led lawless men to lawless acts, and claimed for communism, pillage, and murder the sanction of his venerated name; then Oxford drew back, and Chancellor Berton's formal condemnation showed the dread of countenancing opinions which might be so developed in practical application.

Oxford has been called—by one of her most highly cultured sons—the home of lost causes. She is not that, if it be meant that she lives in the past, and cannot or will not overtake the present. Oxford has always—except perhaps in periods of national apathy and intellectual stagnation—provided teachers who have dared to think for themselves, to found

new schools, to develop fruitful principles; but the cautious, philosophical, reverent, far-seeing temper which the studies of a university ought always to foster, has made her hesitate before pressing a novel doctrine to its extreme conclusions. Each aspect of truth, she would teach us, needs to be corrected by other aspects; the far sight cripples, it may be, the prompt action; yet the most ardent apostles of each new school must not blame their *alma mater* if she sometimes seem a little lukewarm and a little critical. It is her business to think, and judge, and criticise, if she is to be the faithful and kindly nurse of lasting truth.

SERMON IV

GROWTH OF THE UNIVERSITY IN THE FIFTEENTH CENTURY

‘Do good in thy good pleasure unto Zion ; build thou the walls of Jerusalem.’—Ps. li. 18.

It is always interesting to listen to the recital of the names of the public benefactors of the university, when it occurs—as it should occur three weeks hence on Act Sunday—in the Bidding Prayer. The list covers a period of more than five centuries and a half, beginning with Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, who died in 1447, and ending with the kindly lady of whose friendship many of us still cherish an affectionate remembrance, Martha Combe, widow. How remarkable are the contrasts which the list contains; how various were the benefactions made; how different were the motives which prompted the bounty for which a grateful uni-

versity has deemed the giver worthy of special commemoration; how broad are the distinctions between the many types of Christian character and benevolence displayed in those on whom this exceptional honour has been conferred.

The first three of our public benefactors (Humphrey, Duke of Gloucester, John Kempe, Archbishop of Canterbury, and Thomas Kempe, Bishop of London) are associated with events closely connected with the fortunes of St. Mary's in the fifteenth century. I refer more particularly to the building of the Divinity School, and the removal of the University Library from its original home in the upper story of the old Congregation House to the noble chamber which is still called by the name of Duke Humphrey.

The fifteenth century was a dreary period of Oxford history. The strong measures of Courtenay and Arundel (about which I spoke in my last sermon) had gone far to repress free inquiry and to discourage the settlement at Oxford of famous teachers. The slender share of ecclesiastical patronage which was enjoyed by resident

graduates had made a student's career a precarious means of livelihood. The ravages of pestilence had been more than once severely felt. The costly war with France, followed by the domestic troubles and fierce animosities which marked the unhappy reign of Henry VI., had combined with the other causes to create that marked falling off in numbers and in prosperity which are continually the subjects of complaint in the annals of the university.

And yet, under these untoward circumstances, the university ventured in this fifteenth century to undertake considerable building works — pleading, indeed, its very poverty and inability to provide any of the funds necessary for its new undertakings, as a motive for stimulating the liberality of its wealthier sons. In the interesting letters preserved in our registers, and lately edited by Mr. Anstey, there can be read a continual reiteration of the plea of poverty, and urgent appeals to the generosity not only of Oxford men, but also of the general public. The modern incumbent, in his eager

endeavours to gather funds for the restoration or enlargement of church or school, would find many excellent patterns of effective letters in the pages of Mr. Anstey's volume.

The appeal of the university was (1) for new schools of Theology and of Canon Law, (2) for the rebuilding of the university church. This second appeal began some years after the first, but the two more or less overlapped. In both appeals St. Mary's was closely interested, and the result can still be seen in the existing Divinity school and in this spacious and lofty church. Let me speak very briefly of the two matters.

The erection of new schools would have the useful result of withdrawing from the precincts of the overcrowded and overbusy church of St. Mary's many of the more important of the academical exercises hitherto performed in it. It would seem, indeed, that several of these exercises already took place in the private schools where the regents in Theology gave their instruction to the younger scholars, but

many were undoubtedly held in St. Mary's. We know that early in the previous century the *Vesperiae* had been transferred, much to the annoyance of the friars, from their own quieter churches to the more central St. Mary's. We also read of rent paid to the Prior of the Austin Friary, which stood on the site of Wadham College, for the use of the hall of that community for the performance of some theological exercises, and this must have been a tax of which the university would have gladly ridded itself. It would be stirred to emulation also by the activity which was being displayed in the erection of colleges. The fifteenth century, in spite of war and poverty, was a period when the liberality of loyal churchmen was directed to the foundation of collegiate institutions in imitation of the magnificent generosity of William of Wykeham at the close of the preceding century. In the third decade of this century Richard Fleming, in his endeavour to protect Oxford against the errors of the pestilent heresy associated with the teaching of Wyclif,

was raising Lincoln College on a site that lay just westward of the confused maze of schools which bordered School Street between St. Mary's Entry and the northern wall of the city. Chicheley's tower of St. Bernard's College could be seen standing in the fields beyond the north gate, while close below the eastern end of St. Mary's, across the narrow thoroughfare of Cat Street, the workmen were beginning to raise the stately buildings of Chicheley's ampler foundation, of which in his old age he consecrated the chapel, dedicating it to the four Latin Fathers. The site had been gained by purchase from the parish of St. Mary's, and its liberties were protected against any possible claims of Oriel College or the vicar of the church by special privileges bestowed in a bull of Eugenius IV.

In this growing activity in the development of collegiate life the university would discern an additional and pressing motive for providing, for its own purposes, more and more spacious homes: it needed better appliances, more room for study and teaching: thus only would learning

be encouraged; thus only would that material prosperity be once more brought back to the university, now suffering under the anxiety of diminished numbers and dwindling fees.

A proper site for the new school of Theology was found without difficulty; for just at the end of School Street, between the town wall on the north and Exeter College on the west, there was a vacant plot belonging to Balliol College, which that society was willing to surrender in exchange for a tenement called Sparrow Hall. So the appeal for funds was issued. We trace its first beginning in a letter of 1423, mentioning an anonymous promise of a contribution. Letter after letter was written—to the chapters of the chief religious orders and of the cathedral churches; to prelates who owed their position to their Oxford training; to wealthy nobles and wealthy citizens. In 1430 the work of building was begun, but it dragged on for many years; the design was criticised, as we criticise designs now; funds came in very slowly; the death of Cardinal Beaufort in 1447 led to a welcome gift

from his executors of 500 marks; a tax was imposed on non-resident masters and bachelors; graces were sold for hard cash; the religious orders were offered academical degrees on easy terms: and so at last, by fair or dubious means, the school was, in 1466, so far advanced that it could be made use of, and it was furnished with thirty-seven wooden desks and seats.

But its real completion was still distant, and the three wheat-sheaves of the Kempe shield, which may be seen repeated again and again on its carved ceiling, perpetuate the memory of the liberality of Thomas Kempe, Bishop of London, and of his uncle, the Archbishop and Cardinal, by whose bounty the structure was finished, with the addition of the upper chamber, wherein the university library was to find its permanent home. I have used the word 'liberality,' and it may be rightly used; but it is interesting to note that the Kempe gift of 1000 marks (200 to be paid yearly for five years) partook simply of the nature of a bargain. There are many instances of similar agreements, and no suspicion of

impropriety attached to them, though they shock our modern sense of what is fitting. The university, in a formal indenture, promised that a solemn service should be performed each year for the souls of John Kempe and of Thomas Kempe (after his decease), and that their names should be mentioned in the bidding prayer. In return for this promise the gift was made, and it forms part of the same legal document.

Thus in about half a century from the beginning of the building of the Divinity School, the completion of its upper story provided a fitting apartment for the reception of the university Library, and St. Mary's was relieved of another of its many responsibilities. I say St. Mary's, for though the Congregation House and its *solar* were not in a strict sense actually part of the church, they were under the same roof, and were used together, without any distinction, for academical purposes; there was, in practice, quite as intimate a connection as that which exists between a cathedral church and its adjoining chapter-house and library.

In the upper room of the Congregation House, such books as belonged to the university had hitherto found their home. The library had been gradually got together, the beginning having been formed by Bishop Cobham's legacy. The bulk of the volumes were stored in locked chests, but some of them were placed in shelves before the desks, and secured by chains which ran on iron bars. The original arrangement of the chamber is still indicated by the range of narrow decorated windows which survive on its south side. There were originally seven windows on the north and the same number on the south, and between them the desks would run out from the walls, providing accommodation for a goodly number of students. The custom of chaining the books was not so much a precaution against theft, for theft would be no easy matter in a small chamber and under the watchful eye of the university librarian, but rather was intended to prevent the breaking up of the MS. volume into parts, for the convenience of several readers, or the appropriation by any

one student of a volume, which, if left in its place, might be studied or copied by two or three at the same time. For probably the chief use of the library was not for reading, but for copying, that so the treasures of learning might be multiplied, and the student bear off the copy which his own hand had made, to be perused in his chamber, or employed as a text-book when he gave his lecture to his bookless class of standing scholars. To the original collection Duke Humphrey's books were added, by more than one munificent benefaction. I will not describe their nature or their value beyond mentioning the fact that there was only one Greek volume—a vocabulary—among them, that they comprised many books in Italian, of which language he was a devoted student, and that many were splendid and costly, adorned with skilfully designed pictures and illuminations. Before the Duke's death in 1447, about 300 volumes had been given by him, and after his death many more were added. It is probable that Warton is right in his conjecture that many of

them had formed part of the National Library in Paris, which fell into the hands of the Duke of Bedford in 1425, when the English became masters of the French capital, and were by him sent over to England. The gifts of Duke Humphrey were justly regarded by the university as a donation of almost regal munificence, demanding the warmest and even the most fulsome thanks, and the promise of perpetual commemoration of the Duke's name in the public prayer of the grateful university. In addition to the institution of annual masses, with special collects naming the Duke and Duchess (the Duchess was the licentious Eleanor Cobham), it was ordained that at every sermon preached in St. Mary's the preacher should particularly and by name pray for the Duke. No expressions of adulation are too extravagant for the occasion: Duke Humphrey, that perplexing mixture of good and bad—a profligate in an immoral age, a factious, corrupt, and dishonourable politician, and yet a real lover of literature in an age of ignorance and

militarism—was compared by the doctors of Oxford with the mightiest heroes of antiquity, with Hector and Achilles, and Alexander and Julius Caesar. ‘Si itaque Troes suum Hectorem, Thessali Achillem, Macedones Alexandrum, Romani Caesarem in caelum aeternis laudibus efferant, nos Oxonienses nostrum Humfridum immortalibus laudibus efferre debemus.’

As soon as the university was relieved of its pecuniary anxiety with regard to the Divinity school, two other building schemes engrossed its attention. The first, and least important, was the rebuilding of the school of Canon Law, a chamber of which even the site is now unknown. The other and more serious undertaking was the rebuilding of St. Mary’s church. If the letters in which the university ask for money for this purpose are not tinged with gross exaggeration, the condition of the ancient fabric must have been indeed deplorable. It was described as almost a ruin, so falling to pieces that it could not be entered in safety, at any rate in stormy weather, *procellarum saltem temporibus*. The

proposal of leaving even its external walls must be abandoned, a new church was absolutely necessary. Funds must be found, and who can provide them? The university has spent its resources, so they plead, on the Divinity school; degrees are very rare, the corporate income is very small; and as for the parishioners, they are very few and very poor, *tam exiles et jejuni*, that they have not a penny to spare; if money is to be got it must be from others.

So ran the letters, with the addition of special appeals in particular cases. They are addressed to the Primate (Cardinal Morton) and to all other eminent Oxonians; the work proceeds more quickly than might have been expected; in 1490 it had so far advanced that a request was made to the Duke of Bedford for timber for the roofs from his neighbouring forest; and in the early years of the sixteenth century the whole fabric was completed, including that deceptive masking of the northern side which has disfigured the exterior of the fourteenth-century buildings of Adam de Brome's chapel

and the Congregation House, bringing them into a base conformity with the later structure.

One word must be added concerning the chancel. This was erected, not by the university, nor by Oriel College, but by a former Provost of Oriel, Walter Lyhert, Bishop of Norwich, who desired thus to show his love for the society over which he had ruled for ten years, and to enrich it with his bounty, as he was at the very time enriching the Cathedral Church of Norwich by the rich *lierne* vaulting of the nave. His *rebus*—the hart lying in the water—occurs at Norwich, but not here. The few fragments of stained glass which may still be seen in the east window probably belong to his time, and an inscription long survived recording his name and benefaction. The chancel was built before the nave—not later than 1472.

Try for a moment to call up a picture of the church as it was when first completed. In place of the solid stone screen which now blocks the view of the choir there was a wooden rood-loft, the gift of one of the bedels, on which was

erected a tall crucifix. Through and above this partition could be seen the long vista of the chancel, leading the eye onwards to the high altar, before which lights were burning, while above it were the seven niches filled with statues. The existing stalls were then new, the stonework was probably coloured, and every window was enriched with stained glass. The nave and its aisles were unencumbered by galleries or fixed pews, and the whole space of Adam de Brome's chapel was added to the area which could be used for services or business. Within that chapel, which should be called, in strictness, the Lady chapel of the church, stood an altar at the east end, where the entrance now is, and near it was placed the honoured tomb of Adam de Brome, Almoner of Edward II., Founder and first Provost of Oriel College, and Rector of St. Mary's.

Picture the tomb, not in its present mutilated and forlorn condition, but with the upper slab of brown shelled marble resting on sides of equally precious material, and adorned with an elaborate brass, representing a quatrefoil of the

Virgin and Child supported by a slender stem, at the foot of which was a kneeling figure of the founder, with hands uplifted in prayer. The floor of the chapel was then bright with the numerous brasses of provosts and other dignitaries of the college, of whose nameless tombs the mighty slabs still remain. In the nave there was erected a pulpit, of which some fragments may still be seen on the inner wall of the tower. It was of finely carved ashlar stone, a solid and costly structure, well suited to the new and stately building.

The whole church provided a magnificent home for the university, and the ample space of the nave could be readily fitted with staging and transformed into a theatre for academical functions. The iron staples which may be seen embedded in the wall of the south aisle are probably relics of the days when such stages were in frequent use.

From the beginning, then, of the sixteenth century, the university has enjoyed this spacious church for its ordinary academic business, its

formal public acts, and its many religious services. Equally used at first for all these purposes, the secular ceremonies were gradually withdrawn from it (1) in Charles the first's reign by the building of the Convocation House at the west end of the Divinity school, and (2) after the Restoration, by Archbishop Sheldon's generous gift of the theatre, which bears his name. Sheldon's munificence was prompted by the wish to rid the sacred building of functions which were often disturbed by noise and turbulence, such as the open altercation recorded by Wood between the Dean of Christ Church and the Principal of Brasenose, or profaned by the scurrilities and banalities of *terrae filius*, who once so far exceeded all bounds in his attack on the university authorities that the Vice-Chancellor, brave Dean Owen, rose from his seat and turned him by main force out of the rostrum in the presence of a crowded audience.

Perhaps on some other occasion I may have the opportunity of dealing with the later his-

tory of this church, and describing some of the many famous scenes which have been witnessed within its walls. To-day I will mention one matter of exceptional interest which belongs to its earliest annals.

Among the treasures of the university which are sometimes displayed on its festival days is the so-called pall of King Henry VII., a beautiful fabric of costly yellow stuff, enriched by inwoven threads of gold, and bearing on the crimson velvet cross, which extends over its whole length and breadth, the royal arms and badges of the first sovereign of the House of Tudor. In the centre are the royal arms, with the red dragon and greyhound as supporters, the first (the *dexter* supporter) connecting Henry through his father with the line of British kings. On the limbs of the cross are placed alternately the Tudor rose and the portcullis; the former signifying the union of the houses of York and Lancaster, the second telling of Henry's descent through his mother, the saintly Lady Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond

and Derby, from 'Old John of Gaunt, time-honoured Lancaster.'

What then is the history, and what has been the use of this pall?

Henry VII. died in April 1509, at his palace on the banks of the Thames, near Sheen, which he had repaired and beautified, and had called after the name of his hereditary earldom of Richmond. He was buried, as is well known, in the chapel which he had caused to be erected at the extreme east end of the abbey of Westminster. But his Queen, Elizabeth of York—inheritor of the name and beauty of her unhappy mother Elizabeth Woodville—had died in the Tower of London about six years before (Feb. 11, 1503). The death of her eldest son, Prince Arthur, in the previous year had overwhelmed her with a sorrow from which she never rallied, and she passed away nine days after giving birth to a daughter who was named Catharine, perhaps from Catharine of Aragon, the maiden widow of the boy husband. Her body was the first occupant of the

new tomb in the new chapel at Westminster. In the following year Henry bestowed on this university an endowment of £10, to be paid yearly by the abbot, prior, and convent of St. Peter's, Westminster, in order that—in consideration of the stipulated sum—a special service should be held every year in St. Mary's church, for the good estate of the King himself and Lady Margaret, his mother, during their lifetime and for their souls after their death, and for the benefit of the souls of the Queen and their children, of his father and ancestors. The service was to be held on the anniversary of Elizabeth's death, but after his own decease was to be observed on the day of his funeral. Accordingly, in the pre-Reformation university calendars, the *Missa pro anima Regis Henrici Septimi* is assigned to May 11.

'Ever while the world shall endure,' to use the phrase again and again repeated in the indenture, the solemn service was to be held. The university authorities were enjoined to set up a hearse or catafalque in the midst of

the church, 'before the high crucifix,' that is, at the east end of the nave, before the crucifix which was erected, as I have said, on the rood-loft beneath the chancel arch. This hearse was to be 'covered and apparelled with the best and most honourable stuff to the said university belonging.' Four tapers of wax, each weighing 8 lb., were to be set about the hearse, two at the ends and two at the sides, to be lighted and burnt continually during the service. The service itself was very carefully prescribed: it included a *requiem* mass, and various special prayers for those commemorated. At its conclusion the Commissary (or Vice-Chancellor), masters, and scholars, were to 'go together in order to the said hearse, in most solemn and devout wise, and they so going thereunto and standing thereabout' were to chant certain prescribed *responds*, and psalms, and prayers.

The pall which we possess was originally provided for this solemn service.

'Ever while the world shall endure.' So wrote the lawyers; so decreed the King; as

though the service then instituted should never lapse into oblivion. But not for many years did it survive. The Reformation came, in the reign of Henry's mightier son: it came with all its consequences for good or evil: and in the wreck of so much that perished in the storm these masses for the dead were scarcely likely to survive. Within half a century, altar, priest, and ritual were swept away: the rich needlework of the pall remains, through the piety of those who kept it safe, and it now survives as a relic of peculiar interest, linking the university of to-day with the ancient observances of the pre-Reformation church, and reminding us of duties, in the recollection of our famous dead, which are too apt to be forgotten in the stress of our over-busy life of work and play.

‘Ever while the world shall endure.’ How little apprehension of impending changes do the words imply! And yet not only in doctrine and ritual, but throughout the domain of study and learning, was a reformation soon to be experienced. Oxford was passing, almost

unconsciously, from the mediæval to the modern world: it was to be touched by the wider culture which came with the renewed study of Greek, and the revelation of the treasures of ancient thought and imagination. And with the revival of learning came necessarily, though it was not fully foreseen, the vehement assertion of religious liberty, and the disavowal of the claims of authority. Yet the most eminent patrons of the new movement at Oxford were the advocates of a wider learning, not of a purified creed. They wished to bring the university within the extended range of knowledge which was now disclosed: they did not wish to favour the introduction of troublesome theological controversy.

You will no doubt remember that in 1518 Wolsey visited Oxford in attendance on Catharine of Aragon, who with the King and court was at Abingdon escaping from the pestilence which prevailed in London. At the conclusion of the royal visit, Wolsey came to St. Mary's and entered the Congregation House,

meeting there the leading members of the university. He spoke to them with sympathy of his desire to promote the interests of learning, and of his readiness to serve the university to the best of his ability. He further signified his intention of founding new Professorships to meet the requirements of the age—Professorships in Medicine, Philosophy, Mathematics, Greek, Rhetoric, and Humanity, a project partly carried out in his foundation of Cardinal College. I mention this to show that it was the endowment and encouragement of learning at which Wolsey aimed, when at the height of his power and prosperity: there was no wish on his part, nor on the part of Warham, though the friend of Erasmus and Colet, to encourage, or even to tolerate, the doctrines of the Reformation. That strong stirring of spiritual forces was to be guided by other and very different leaders. But it was bound to come, as part of one and the same great movement, through which the intellect and the conscience of men were to be set free from bondage.

SERMON V

THE OXFORD MARTYRS

‘Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads ; we went through fire and through water : but thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place.’—Ps. lxvi. 12.

THE new church of St. Mary’s, completed—as I mentioned in my last sermon—soon after the beginning of the sixteenth century, was the scene of many memorable events during the first fifty years of its existence. That period covers the reigns of Henry VIII., Edward VI., and Mary.

The prevalence of Lollardism is illustrated by the case of one Thomas Manne, who in 1512 was convicted of that crime by the Bishop of Lincoln, and brought to this church to make a public recantation of his errors. The new teaching, by this time definitely associated with the name of Luther, was spreading secretly in both the English universities ; the ‘hellish Lutherans,’

as Wolsey called them, needed to be crushed by authority. They were publicly condemned; and in 1521 Nicholas Kratzer, a Bavarian, whose fame as a mathematician had led Bishop Fox to place him as a Fellow on his new foundation of Corpus Christi College, the designer of the sundial which had then been recently erected in our churchyard, affixed to it with his own hand a paper condemning the heretical opinions. Fifteen years later a Cambridge graduate, by name Mallorie, was sent to Oxford to recant his errors and bear his faggot, in order that the Oxford students might be terrified into adherence to orthodoxy. 'Twas appointed,' writes Wood, 'that he should be brought solemnly into St. Mary's church, in the presence of the doctors, masters, and other students, besides multitudes of town dwellers, where, for the greater solemnity of the matter, Dr. Richard Smyth, the reader of the King's lecture lately appointed, was to make a sermon at the recantation. In the performance of which was a false rumour spread in the congregation that the church was on fire,

which breeding great confusion in the auditors, the assembly was dispersed without the solemn finishing thereof.'

Within these walls must have been heard the debates, in 1530, on the question of the King's divorce, when the regent masters, to the vexation of their seniors, were so stubborn in their refusal to do the King's bidding, that he found it necessary to remind them of the homely proverb, *non est bonum irritare crabrones*. Even under this significant pressure, the formal declaration of the university, in accordance with the royal wish, was carried only after much delay, and with great reluctance, and by the employment of very questionable methods. Four years later, upon the passing of the Act of Submission, a great congregation of regents and non-regents was held here, and it was decreed, in subservience to the King's express demand, that the Bishop of Rome had no greater jurisdiction conferred upon him by God in the Holy Scripture, in this realm of England, than any other foreign bishop.

In Edward's reign, Peter Martyr, the second Regius Professor of Divinity, was busy with his defence of the Protestant position, and fastened his famous challenge to the door of St. Mary's. In this church the visitors opened their commission, after first listening to a long discourse from Peter Martyr; and here they held their sittings. Their extravagant proceedings, the despoiling of the libraries, the destruction of altars, statues, and painted windows, the abolition of the mass, the discouragement of learning—all this I must pass over, though this church was among the sufferers; and indeed the results of Edward's short reign, in spite of the ruin inflicted, were transitory enough. Two days after the 'wan face' of the dying boy had been seen for a moment at a window of the palace at Greenwich, Mary came to the throne, on July 6, 1553. Oxford turned, at least in outward semblance, with more than readiness to the ancient faith and ancient ritual. At some of the colleges there was shown an eager alacrity to restore what had been taken away. At Corpus the

vessels and vestments for the mass had been carefully preserved in hiding; they were brought out again; and though Jewel was firm in refusing to conform, the college, it is said, 'was such as if no Reformation at all had been there.' Peter Martyr, as he was leaving Oxford, heard the little bell of Corpus ring for mass, and he sighed, and said that the bell would destroy all the doctrine in the college which he before had, through his and Jewel's labours, planted therein.

But in connection with St. Mary's, all other events of this period sink into insignificance when compared with the scenes in which Cranmer, Ridley, and Latimer played their parts. Forgive me if, in a very brief narrative of that famous and most tragic episode, I go over ground familiar to many who hear me. My apology must be, that many a well-known story gains in interest if it be retold on the very spot where the incidents took place.

It may be indeed objected that these events bore no close relation to academical history strictly so called; yet it would be difficult to

pass them by in an attempt (as is the purpose of these sermons) to connect St. Mary's with the chief movements which have concerned the university. It is true, indeed, that Cranmer of Jesus College, Ridley of Pembroke Hall, and Latimer of Clare Hall, were all Cambridge men; and that of the body of divines who were appointed to minister the articles to them only a certain number were Oxford representatives—some were chosen by Cambridge, others by the Convocation of Canterbury; moreover, that there were no formal proceedings before our own Congregation, no strictly academical procedure, except that the report of the inquiry and its sequel was sent up to the Convocation of the province of Canterbury under the university seal.

Nevertheless, history has so closely interwoven the fate of these three men with this university and this church, that it seems only right for me to recall to your memory something of the strange and grim tragedy which will always be associated with their names—something at

least of those incidents which are directly connected with this building.

The first famous scene in St. Mary's occurred on the afternoon of Saturday, April 14, 1554.

The Convocation of Canterbury and the two universities had been authorised by the Queen to appoint a body of divines to dispute with the three bishops on certain theses concerning the sacrament of the altar, which had been carefully drawn up. The disputation was to take place at Oxford, and thither Cranmer and his two companions had been brought from the Tower; and they had been handed over by Sir John Williams, afterwards Lord Williams, to the charge of the city authorities. The Commissioners assembled on April 13. The Cambridge representatives, seven in number, were lodged at the Cross inn, and were hospitably welcomed; the Dean of Christ Church, who was Vice-Chancellor (then styled Commissary), sending by one of the bedels a dish of apples and a gallon of wine to the Vice-Chancellor of Cambridge.

Next morning they were formally incorporated as members of this university; and after a procession through the streets, a service at Christ Church, and a dinner at Lincoln College, they all assembled at St. Mary's in Adam de Brome's chapel, and thence moved to the chancel, where they ranged themselves, thirty three in number, in a semicircle below the high altar. Perhaps it was for this occasion that the finials of the stalls on both sides of the chancel were truncated as we see them now, the tops being cut off to enable them to furnish a support for the planks on which the platforms for the crowded assembly might be placed.

Weston, Rector of Lincoln College, Dean of Westminster, and Prolocutor of the Lower House, acted as President. When they had taken their seats the Mayor was sent for, and was bidden to bring in his prisoner, Thomas Cranmer. Cranmer in due course entered the chancel, guarded by javelin-men. He bowed reverently to the assembled doctors, and then, declining the stool offered to him, stood with staff in hand awaiting

the event. It was plain that he was to be treated, not as a disputant on equal terms, but rather as a culprit at the bar of justice.

Weston addressed him in a long harangue concerning the unity of the church, and the breach of that unity which he had caused. Then the three articles which had been drawn up by Convocation were presented to Cranmer, and he was asked to assent to them. They were clear and unequivocal statements of the full Roman doctrine of the mass. On Cranmer's refusal to accept them he was bidden to put his reasons in writing, that they might be discussed on the following Monday. He was then taken back to his cell in Bocardo, and Ridley and Latimer were severally introduced, with a like result. Latimer is described as having a kerchief and two or three caps on his head, his spectacles hanging by a string at his breast, and a staff in his hand. He pleaded age and sickness, and was allowed a chair. Latimer is often spoken of as an octogenarian at this time. But if Fox's statement be true, that he entered

Cambridge at the age of fourteen—and it seems certain that he matriculated in 1506—his age must have been about sixty-two. He was, however, undoubtedly in weak health and infirm in body.

From St. Mary's the scene shifts to the Divinity school, where, during the following week, the three prelates were allowed the liberty of an unreal and often unseemly discussion of the grave points at issue. I must not describe the disputations, though they are full of interest. Weston, who presided, was a rough and arbitrary partisan, possessing, however, an element of kindness which occasionally showed itself. If Fox is to be believed, he sat with a cup of liquor at his side, combating *non sine suo Theseo*. He allowed noise and interruptions, encouraging the audience to clap or hiss, and at the close of the day's proceedings would invite them to 'Cry all together, *vincit veritas, vincit veritas*.' He regarded the whole matter strictly from a business point of view, and when Dr. Tresham, the saintly old canon of Christ Church, ventured

to say to Cranmer, 'May you have given you a better mind, and return into the way of righteousness,' Weston sharply interposed, 'We come hither to dispute, not to pray.' 'Is it not lawful to pray for them that err?' pleaded Tresham. 'It is not lawful yet,' answered Weston; 'but proceed.'

One strange feature of the whole matter was that each could taunt his opponent with change of opinions. Latimer, for instance, could say of Weston, 'that in all King Edward's time he was a curate beside Bishopsgate, and content to feed his flock with the doctrine that he now called heresy,' and Weston could retort on Latimer, 'Ye have said mass at Greenwich full devoutly.' The Cambridge Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Young, was a conspicuous instance of profitable tergiversation; he had himself translated into Latin Cranmer's work on the sacraments, published in 1550, and now, on changing his views, was in enjoyment of high academical and ecclesiastical preferment, and was sitting to convict Cranmer of heresy in regard to the

very points on which so lately he agreed with him.

On Friday, April 20, the bishops were again summoned to St. Mary's, and in the chancel all three met, for the very last time on earth. Once more they were asked to assent to the theses concerning the sacrament: on their firm refusal they were all condemned for heresy, with its consequence, the penalty of death by burning. They received the sentence with dignity. 'From this your judgment,' said Cranmer, 'I appeal to the judgment of God Almighty, trusting to be present in heaven with Him, for whose presence in the altar I am condemned.'

Ridley said, 'Although I be not of your company, yet doubt I not but my name is written in another place, whither this sentence will send us sooner than we should by the course of nature have come.' 'I thank God most heartily,' exclaimed Latimer, 'that He hath prolonged my life to this end, that I may in this case glorify God by that kind of death.'

And so they parted, no doubt expecting that

death would soon come. Yet eighteen months passed before Ridley and Latimer suffered at the stake, and nearly two years before Cranmer followed them. For, indeed, the present proceedings were of no effect, although the prisoners did not regain their liberty.

Consider how the matter stood. They were all three of episcopal rank, and of the body which condemned them not one member was above the rank of the priesthood.

The authority of the court—if authority it had—was based upon the Queen's commission. But Mary was deeply and sincerely attached to the Roman obedience; her chief wish was to effect a reconciliation with Rome. She could scarcely act now, as her father would doubtless have acted, in defiance of the authority of the Papal See and the requirements of the Canon Law. Under that law it was not allowable that a bishop should be condemned by priests, or that a spiritual person should be put to death without first being deprived of his spiritual character by formal degradation. The whole

procedure of this imperfect tribunal, acting as it had done without any reference to the Apostolic See, must have been highly displeasing to Rome, and probably Pole, or some other friend, had warned Mary of the danger she was incurring if she allowed its sentence to carry any weight. We shall see that after the reconciliation with Rome, which took place in the following November, on St. Andrew's day, new processes were issued against these three prelates, and their ultimate condemnation was in strict accordance with Roman precedent. Cranmer, it is true, was already under attainder for treason; his life had for this been forfeited; but he was still a spiritual person, and Mary may well have hesitated to act in his case as though he had no such spiritual character. Pole, in a letter to Cranmer, written at a later date, clearly points out that in cases of treason, as in cases of heresy, the Canon Law demands that a spiritual person must be degraded in due form, and be divested of his spiritual character, before the secular arm can reach him.

Thus the whole matter fell into abeyance, and fresh proceedings were not begun till late in the summer of the next year. And then a distinction was drawn between Cranmer, who as Archbishop had received the pallium from Rome, and the other two prelates, who were of lesser dignity. The processes were quite distinct, and in some respects dissimilar, but they appear to have been strictly in accordance with Roman precedent.

In the summer of 1555 the King and Queen of England humbly petitioned Pope Julius III. that Cranmer might be tried. The Pope thereupon issued a citation to Thomas Cranmer to appear at Rome, either in person or by proxy, within a certain time; he then appointed a delegate, who was commissioned to deal with the whole matter, Cardinal de Puteo. He in his turn nominated three sub-delegates to act for him in England. They were Brooks, Bishop of Gloucester, the Dean of St. Paul's, and the Archdeacon of Canterbury. The matter was practically in the hands of Brooks, and he

was of proper episcopal rank. He had been Gardiner's chaplain, had lately succeeded Hooper in the see of Gloucester, and was an Oxford man, a former Scholar and Fellow of Corpus.

Brooks, thus armed with full authority, went to Oxford, and on September 7 served Cranmer in his prison with the citation to appear in Rome within eighty days. Two days later he opened his court in St. Mary's church, and on Thursday, September 12, Cranmer was brought before him.

At the extreme east end of our chancel a wooden throne, ten feet high, had been erected for Bishop Brooks, so that he might sit in solitary eminence just below the sacrament of the altar. On either side of him, but at a lower level, were seats for Dr. Martin and Dr. Story, the representatives or proctors of the King and Queen. The chancel was crowded with onlookers, and when all was ready Cranmer was sent for to come before them.

'He came forth of the prison to the church of St. Mary's,' writes Fox, 'fetched forth with bills and gleves for fear lest he should start away,

being clothed in a fair black gown, with his hood on both shoulders, such as doctors of Divinity in the university use to wear. Who, after he was come into the church, and did see them sit in their pontificalibus, he did not put off his cap to any of them, but stood still till that he was called. And anon one of the proc-tors for the Pope, or else his doctor, called, "Thomas, Archbishop of Canterbury, appear here and make answer to that shall be laid to thy charge; that is to say, for blasphemy, incontinen-cy, and heresy; and make answer here to the Bishop of Gloucester, representing the Pope's person."

The prisoner was then brought nearer to the tribunal. To Martin and Story he bowed low, bending his knee to the ground and doffing his cap. Then he put on his cap again, and looking Brooks full in the face, made no obeisance to him at all. In answer to the Bishop's remonstrance, Cranmer said that he meant no contempt for his person, but that as he had once taken a solemn oath never to

consent to the admitting of the Bishop of Rome's authority within the realm of England, he could do nothing, by sign or token, that would be inconsistent with that oath.

'Thus answered he,' writes Fox, 'both modestly, wisely, and patiently, with his cap on his head, not once bowing or making any reverence to him that represented the Pope's person, which was wondrously of the people marked that was there present.'

Of the trial before Brooks I must not say more. He disclaimed for himself the title of judge; his duty was to investigate the matter and report to the Holy See. Accordingly, at the end of November, Cardinal de Puteo placed before the Pope the contents of Brooks's dispatches; and on December 4, after a formal citation of Cranmer to appear at Rome, he was pronounced by the fierce old Paul IV. to be 'excommunicated, anathematised, deprived, disabled, and to be handed over to the secular power as a notorious heresiarch and follower of heresiarchs like Wiclif of damned memory

and Martin Luther.' Two months elapsed before the instrument for his degradation, the legitimate sequel of this sentence, reached England.

The long interval between the trial and the execution of the sentence was the saddest period of Cranmer's life. He receded from his lofty position; and in the series of recantations or submissions which he was persuaded to sign, we trace the successive stages of his humiliation. But it was all to no purpose. The answer of the Crown to his fourth recantation, which was signed after his degradation in Christ Church, and taken up to London by Bonner, was short and sharp. Cranmer had been condemned and degraded by the Holy See, and delivered over to the secular arm and power: 'we bid you therefore burn him with fire in an open place before the people.' His later recantations, more painful even than the earlier ones, availed him nothing; and the last scene of his life was soon to come: that scene which lifted him again to the high estate of a faithful martyr.

Meanwhile, Ridley and Latimer had been dealt with under a separate process. Pole, as Papal legate, appointed a commission of three bishops—White of Lincoln, Brooks of Gloucester, and Holyman of Bristol. They were all three Oxford men, White and Holyman belonging to the foundation of William of Wykeham. They came to Oxford. The cases were heard in the Divinity school, and the sentences were delivered in the chancel of St. Mary's at the end of September. Without further reference to Rome, both were degraded and delivered over to the secular arm, and both were burnt in Canditch, opposite Balliol College, on October 16. Latimer's death was quick, but Ridley suffered horribly. The faggots, through the mistaken kindness of friends, were packed too closely; his lower limbs were burnt before his trunk was touched by the flames. Cranmer is said to have viewed the scene from the tower of St. Michael's church.

And now, five months later, he was to follow them.

On Friday, March 20, 1556, Dr. Cole, the Provost of Eton, arrived at Oxford. He was commissioned by Mary to preach the sermon at Cranmer's death, which was fixed for the next day. Cole visited Cranmer in Bocardo, but seems not to have told him that his death was so near, and perhaps the prisoner still indulged the hope that his submissions might even now prevail to save his life. Early next morning Cole came again to the prison, and asked if Cranmer had money. Finding that he had none, he gave him fifteen crowns. This act could have only one meaning; the money was for distribution to the poor at the stake.

Then at nine o'clock on this Saturday morning, March 21, the Mayor and Aldermen came to the prison, and in their charge Cranmer was led to St. Mary's. The day was wet, or the whole ceremony would have taken place in Canditch. At the prisoner's side walked two Dominican friars, Father John, and Father Richard, who chanted psalms as they went.

Father John de Garcia, or de villa Garcina, was a Spaniard, and was now Reader in Divinity at Magdalen College. He soon afterwards became Regius Professor of Divinity. On entering the church the friars began the *Nunc dimittis*, and Cranmer then knew—if he had yet any doubt—that his death was certain. A raised platform had been prepared opposite the pulpit, and the mutilated base of the pillar just eastward of the Vice-Chancellor's throne still shows the spot where Cranmer stood or knelt on that memorable day. As he was now regarded as a poor layman, he was dressed in a tattered gown, and on his head was an old square cap, covering the skull-cap which was worn to hide the baldness caused by the removal of the mark of the priestly tonsure at his degradation. His beard was long and white. Since Henry's death, in token of sorrow for the loss of his sovereign, he had allowed it to grow.

Conducted to the platform, he was placed well in sight of the assembled crowd. He

turned to the pillar against which he stood, and knelt down and prayed. Cole mounted the stone pulpit, immediately confronting Cranmer, and proceeded to deliver a carefully prepared discourse. He preached for two hours, a cruel length on such an occasion. He propounded many elaborate reasons why Cranmer must die, comforting him with the assurance that to one dying in the true faith death meant salvation, and that masses for his soul should be said in the churches of Oxford. One curious reason for his death was that only thus could justice be really done. In Henry's reign Fisher and More had been put to death. Though the Duke of Northumberland might be regarded as an equivalent victim to balance More, yet for Fisher, a bishop and cardinal, no adequate equivalent could be found except in the person of the Primate of all England.

An eye-witness, who had no sympathy with Cranmer's opinions, has narrated the whole scene while the long sermon was being preached. 'I shall not need,' he writes, 'to describe

Cranmer's behaviour, his sorrowful countenance, his heavy cheer, his face bedewed with tears; sometimes lifting his eyes to heaven in hope, sometimes casting them down to the earth for shame; to be brief, an image of sorrow: the dolour of his heart bursting out at his eyes in plenty of tears; retaining ever a quiet and grave behaviour.'

When the sermon was finished the people began to move away, so as to view the procession when it left the church. But Cole bade them stay a while. 'Brethren,' said he, 'lest any man doubt of this man's earnest conversion and repentance, you shall hear him speak before you; and therefore I pray you, Master Cranmer, that you will now perform that you promised not long ago; namely, that you would openly express the true and undoubted profession of your faith, that you may take away all suspicion of men, and that all men may understand that you are a Catholic indeed.'

'I will do it,' said Cranmer, 'and that with

a good will.' He stood up, he put off his cap, and first asked the people to join in prayer for him: and then he read that wonderful prayer, unsurpassed in pathos and dignity, which is familiar to every lover of English devotional literature. Then he knelt down and said the Lord's Prayer. He rose from his knees; and reading from a paper drawn from his bosom, he spoke of obedience to God and to the Crown: of brotherly love, and charity towards rich and poor. Next he declared his faith. And then he went on: 'And now I come to the great thing that so much troubleth my conscience more than anything that ever I did, and that is——' And now everybody in the whole concourse expected him to make a full and ample recantation of his Protestant errors. That indeed had been written down in the paper which he held in his hand; that was what Cole and the friars were waiting for; but to the astonishment and dismay of all he left the paper, and looked up, and thus continued the sentence—'and

that is, the setting abroad of writings contrary to the truth, which here I now renounce and refuse, as things written with my hand contrary to the truth which I thought in my heart, and writ for fear of death, and to save my life, if it might be; and that is, all such bills which I have written or signed with mine own hand since my degradation, wherein I have written many things untrue: and forasmuch as my hand offended in writing contrary to my heart, therefore my hand shall first be punished. For if I may come to the fire, it shall be first burned. And as for the Pope, I refuse him as Christ's enemy and anti-Christ, with all his false doctrine.'

As he finished, he turned as white as ashes; but his countenance was set and calm, and there were no more traces of tears. All was in confusion. Lord Williams, who was in command of the guard within the church, asked him if he were in his senses. Cole from the pulpit shouted that they should stop the heretic's mouth and take him away. He was

pulled down from his platform, and hurried out of the church to the stake outside the walls of the city. The friars kept by his side. '*Non fecisti?*' asked Friar John, 'surely thou hast not done it?' He could not believe the words that he had heard. 'Thou wilt drag with thee innumerable souls into hell,' cried Friar Richard; 'what madness hath brought thee again into this error?' 'Collect thyself,' urged Friar John; 'die not in desperation.' 'Hence,' said Cranmer; 'here is a man who would have me believe that the Pope is the Head of the Church, where he is rather the tyrant.' 'Well,' answered Friar John, 'if he would spare thy head, thou wouldst willingly acknowledge him head.' It was a home-thrust, perhaps to be pardoned, spoken as it was to a man on the brink of death, and (as the speaker believed) on the brink of perdition. Cranmer was silent, and then after a long pause he replied with transparent and extraordinary candour, 'It is so; if he had saved my life, I should have obeyed his laws.'

He came to the spot where Ridley and Latimer had suffered five months before. He was stripped to his shirt, and fastened to the stake with that iron band which is still preserved at Oxford. The friars left him; they could do no more. 'Let us go from him; we ought not to be nigh him, for the devil is with him.' But one named Ely, a bachelor of Divinity of Brasenose College, urged him even now to unsay his fatal words. It was to no purpose. He was absolutely firm. 'Make short, make short,' cried Lord Williams. Cranmer shook hands with some of his friends; but Ely, after making one more fruitless effort to persuade him, refused his grasp.

The fire was lighted and burnt well. He stretched out his hand into the flames, crying, 'O this offending right hand! O this offending right hand!' and though he once or twice withdrew it to wipe his brow, he held it out again till strength failed him, and at last was seen standing amid the flames, motionless, peaceful, at rest.

‘Surely his death,’ wrote the bystander already quoted, ‘much grieved every man, but not after one sort. Some pitied to see his body so tormented with the fire raging upon the silly carcase that counted not of the folly. Others that passed not much of the body lamented to see him spill his soul, wretchedly, without redemption, to be plagued for ever. His friends sorrowed for love; his enemies for pity; strangers for a common kind of humanity whereby we are bound one to another.’

How is it that you, my brethren, sorrow for Thomas Cranmer, as in this church you recall his story, with an interval of three centuries and a half between our days and his? Do you sorrow as friends, or as enemies, or as strangers?

SERMON VI

ST. MARY'S AS A PLACE OF BURIAL

‘Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth ; and mine age is as nothing before thee ; verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity.’—Ps. xxxix. 5.

To all ancient parish churches there is attached the peculiar interest connected with the graves of those whose bodies, through successive generations, have been laid to rest within the hallowed precincts. And St. Mary's, intimately related to the whole history of the university, and the parish church of well-to-do citizens residing in the very centre of Oxford, has doubtless been the burial place of many notable persons. Moreover, six academical foundations lie wholly or in part within its parochial boundaries, and many of the members of those societies would have possessed a legal right to burial within the

walls or in the adjoining graveyard of their parish church.

It is perhaps a matter for surprise, under these circumstances, that the number of famous men who can be mentioned as undoubtedly buried at St. Mary's is comparatively small. Yet it should be remembered that the Colleges of later foundation were not, like the earliest Colleges, dependent at first on some parish church for their religious services, but that each had its own chapel; and within the chapel would be the fittest place for the interment of the successive Heads, and other members of their society. It would be likely then—and it is actually the case—that the richer memorial slabs which at St. Mary's mark the burial places of distinguished men should belong to an early period, and should in most cases be so mutilated that they must needs be nameless. Thus—for instance—on the floor of Adam de Brome's chapel there may still be seen eight large marble slabs, bearing the matrices of elaborate and costly brass work. In Wood's time there were ten of these slabs, of which he

writes that they had had 'inscriptions on them laid for certain of the ancient priests and fellows of Oriel College, but their particular names I cannot tell. Such hath been the baseness of certain people that not only these but more than eighteen in the chancel and church have been most sacrilegiously defaced. I have heard some ancient men report that in the beginning of King James's reign or thereabouts a certain person being taken with some of the brass about him that he had stolen away in the night time, was set in the public stocks for his punishment, with the brass hanging about his neck, and afterwards whipped.'

With the exception of the now neglected tomb of Adam de Brome, from which the brass has long ago been stolen, there is no monument in the chapel called by his name, to mark with certainty the interment of any Provost of Oriel except John Eveleigh, who died in 1814; but on the floor of the chancel may be seen a large dark marble slab still bearing a brass with an inscription. It is the monument of William

de Hawkesworth, the third Provost. He had in the year 1349 been elected Chancellor by the northern party in the university, while the southern party had chosen one John Wylliot, late fellow of Merton, in opposition to Hawkesworth. Feuds between North and South were very common at Oxford during the fourteenth century, but on this occasion so fierce was the contention and so hot the fray that St. Mary's Church was twice entered by the rioters, and towards the end of March Wylliot's party within the sacred precincts 'cried him up to be their Chancellor, and on those that did oppose him they laid violent hands, beat, kicked about, and cudgelled, till some were sorely wounded, and others in a manner killed.' This disgraceful scene, in which Hawkesworth was probably personally involved, may well have led to his death, which occurred less than three weeks afterwards, on April 8, 1349. The fatal brawls, so often witnessed, during this period, within the consecrated precincts of St. Mary's, necessitated in each case a formal 'reconciliation' by

the Bishop of the diocese; a burden which lay so heavy on the occupant of the vast see of Lincoln, that Edward III. suggested to the Pope in 1330 that the abbot of Oseney or of Rewley might be empowered to act on such occasions in place of the diocesan.

The chancel itself is honeycombed with graves, and some of the memorial stones have an exceptional interest. During the Civil War it served as the place of interment of many of the royalist soldiers, both of those who died from wounds received in action, and of the victims of the even more fatal camp fever which prevailed in the overcrowded city. The ancient slabs were often used again to mark the spot of these more recent burials, as is indicated by the initials rudely cut on many of them, with the date of 1643 or 1644. In more than one instance, a piece of white marble has been inserted in the older stone. In this way is recorded the death of Sir Charles Blount of Mapledurham, who was an officer in the King's army, and was shot by his own sentry for not standing at his command.

One burial of a later date should be briefly mentioned. The name of Dr. John Radcliffe, incised on one of the small squares of the marble pavement of the nave, a little to the north of the chancel entrance, gives the only indication which Oxford has afforded of the grave of one of its most munificent benefactors. Dr. Radcliffe died in London on November 1, 1714. His body lay in state at his private house until its removal to Oxford nearly four weeks later. It was then placed with great ceremony in the Divinity school. Thence it was removed to the Convocation House, where the public orator delivered a Latin eulogy in the presence of all the members of Convocation. Thence it was borne with much pomp to St. Mary's church, the long procession passing by the north gate and Carfax. The Vice-Chancellor preceded the coffin: it was followed by noblemen and doctors and other graduates, all of whom had been presented with gloves and rings before leaving the Convocation House. At Carfax the choirs of Christ Church, New College, and St. John's

joined the procession and sang anthems till the corpse was set down in the nave of the church. Then after another oration the interment took place; and the name of the deceased was afterwards enrolled by a formal decree among the public benefactors of the university. It might be thought that such exceptional observances would have been quickly followed by the erection of some fitting monument to so splendid a benefactor; but, strange to say, his body was left unhonoured and unremembered for more than a century. At last, when the floors were disturbed on the occasion of the reseating of the church in 1827, some workmen lighted upon the coffin which bore his name. Even then, no greater honour was paid to his memory than the cutting of his name on one tiny slab of the new pavement.

Much more might be told about the graves and monuments of St. Mary's: but I must pass on, to speak of one interment, of a much earlier date, which has a very special interest. On the first of the marble steps leading to the altar it

is recorded that 'in a vault of brick at the upper end of this Quire was buried Amy Robsart, wife of Lord Robert Dudley, K.G., on Sunday 22nd September A.D. 1560.'

Amy, the only daughter and heiress of Sir John Robsart, a knight of good estate in Norfolk, had been married to Lord Robert Dudley, fifth son of John Dudley Duke of Northumberland, on June 4, 1550. They were both young, the bridegroom being nineteen and the bride eighteen years of age. The marriage took place at Sheen, in presence of the young king, Edward VI. Amy's death occurred at Cumnor Place, on September 8, 1560. There is no evidence of any discord between her and her husband during the ten years of their married life. She did not indeed accompany him when he was in attendance on Queen Elizabeth, but that would be only during the last two years of her life, and though he was probably often absent from her side, there is no proof that his affections were alienated, or that he meditated her death. The genius of Scott has made Amy's

name immortal, and her figure to rank among the most pathetic of the heroines of fiction; the victim of Leicester's ambition, and of her own unfaltering love; the prisoner of a cruel, odious, and miserly jailer; perishing by an awful death, through a foul conspiracy planned by villains of the deepest dye. But history destroys most of the romance which is the singular charm of the novel of *Kenilworth*. Amy is there called the Countess of Leicester; but Lord Robert Dudley was not created Earl of Leicester till more than three years after her death. She pays a secret visit to Kenilworth under the escort of Wayland Smith; but Kenilworth was not granted to Dudley till a few months before he received the earldom. Elizabeth's first visit to Leicester's new and splendid seat took place two years later: and the long stay of the Court at Kenilworth, to which the novelist expressly refers as the occasion of Amy's interview with Elizabeth, was in the year 1575, when Amy had lain for fifteen years in her grave in St. Mary's church. As to the chief actors in the story; the Verney

of history is Sir Richard Verney of Compton Verney in Warwickshire, a man of good position and unblemished character, who filled the office of High Sheriff of his county in the year following that in which he is described as having inflicted death by poison upon himself in horror at his guilt in Amy's murder. Anthony Foster of Cumnor Place was a member of an ancient Shropshire family settled in Berkshire; at the time of the tragedy he rented Cumnor Place of Dr. Owen, the King's physician, and some while afterwards he bought the estate. His wife was a lady of high rank in the adjoining county, a niece of Lord Williams of Thame, the officer who had commanded the troops at the death of Cranmer. Foster was Lord Robert Dudley's agent, and a man of honour and reputation; his monument, which may still be seen in the chancel of Cumnor church, with its heraldic achievements and dignified words of eulogy, corroborates what is known from other sources as to his birth and character. There is only very slight evidence to connect Dudley with

his wife's untimely death, though there were undoubtedly some circumstances which might fairly raise suspicion. It was not till the publication of an avowedly hostile work called *Leicester's Commonwealth* that he was deliberately charged with the murder of his young wife.

At the time of her death, the Lady Amy was an inmate of Foster's residence at Cumnor Place, having separate apartments in the spacious manor house. On September 8, she had sent her own servants over to Abingdon, to enjoy the fair. She dined with the other ladies of the house; and later in the evening her servants, on their return from the fair, found her lying dead at the foot of a staircase. There was no evidence of foul play. There was no attempt to hush the matter up. Neither the marriage nor the death had been concealed from the Queen, to whom it was reported that Lord Dudley's wife had broken her neck. Nothing indeed would have been more fatal to any ambitious schemes which Dudley may have cherished, than a suspicion on the Queen's

part that he had caused his lawful wife to be murdered. He did not, it is true, go himself to Cumnor on receiving the disastrous intelligence of Amy's sudden death; we know not why he stayed at Windsor; but his very omission to perform this obvious act of affection may be fairly regarded as evidence of his innocence rather than his guilt; it was sure to be urged against him. He was not, however, inactive. Sir Thomas Blount had been despatched by him to Cumnor on the previous day, on some matter of business. A messenger was at once sent to overtake him before his journey's end, bearing a letter which enjoined that a complete and impartial investigation into the circumstances of the death should be held; and Dudley also wrote with all speed to Amy's half-brother, Mr. Appleyard, urging him to go to Cumnor and see that the enquiry was thorough. An inquest was held, and after a minute and protracted investigation, the verdict was delivered that no presumption could be found of evil dealing.

Nothing remained to be done, but to take care that the funeral of the poor girl, cut off in the flower of her age so suddenly and so mysteriously, should be celebrated with all proper ceremonial. The body was moved from Cumnor, where perhaps it had been already buried, and was 'secretly brought by night' to Gloucester Hall in Oxford, that it might be laid with all honour in St. Mary's church. Gloucester Hall, now Worcester College, was an ancient Benedictine foundation, and had in 1542 been assigned as part of the endowment of the new bishopric of Oxford, which Henry VIII. had created, with the Abbey of Oseney as its cathedral church. King, the last Abbot of Oseney and first Bishop of Oxford, had occupied Gloucester College, as it was then called, as his episcopal residence. When the see was re-founded in 1546 at Christ Church, Gloucester College was not expressly included in its endowments, but the matter was left so indefinite that litigation between the bishops of Oxford and the later owners of the College continued into the

seventeenth century. At the time of Amy Dudley's funeral, the property had just passed into the hands of Sir Thomas White, the founder of St. John Baptist's College, and he had there established a Hall, with a Principal and one hundred scholars. William Stocke was the first Principal.

Hither then was brought the body from Cumnor, three miles distant. Great preparations had been made for its honourable reception. Three chambers were hung with black cloth, on which were displayed scutcheons bearing the arms of Dudley and his wife in pale. In one of these chambers lay the coffin; the others were assigned as dining-rooms for the gentlewomen in attendance and the rest of the mourners. St. Mary's meanwhile had been prepared for the funeral to take place there on Sunday, September 22. A vault of brick had been constructed at the east end of the chancel. The church was draped in black cloth, on which scutcheons were placed. At the east end of the nave, just outside the chancel, a catafalque richly ornamented

had been erected. To this lofty position the body was borne by eight tall yeomen. The chief mourner was not indeed Dudley himself, but Mistress Norreys, daughter of Lord Williams of Thame, who was attended by train-bearers. The procession was headed by the members of the university, and the surpliced choir singing as they moved up the church. At the sides of the coffin were two graduates in long gowns and with hoods over their heads, and at each corner a graduate bearing a bannerol. Mr. Appleyard, Amy's half-brother, was at the foot of the coffin, bearing 'the great banner.' The service was duly performed, and a sermon was preached from the text, 'Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord,' by the Vice-Chancellor, Dr. Francis Babington, Master of Balliol, and chaplain to Lord Robert Dudley. 'As he preached,' writes Wood, 'he tripped once or twice, by recommending to his auditors the virtues of that lady so pitifully "murdered," instead of so pitifully "slain."' The body was duly carried into the chancel and lowered

into the brick vault prepared for its reception.

Six years afterwards the recently created Earl of Leicester stood for the first time near his wife's nameless grave at St. Mary's, in attendance, as Chancellor of the university, on the great Queen, for alliance with whom, his enemies averred, he had connived at the murder of his early love.

The opening years of the reign of Queen Elizabeth mark the extension of that policy of generous and tolerant hospitality towards foreign Protestants which had been begun under Edward VI., in whose reign the Flemish refugees first flocked into England, and the Duke of Somerset established a settlement of Walloon weavers in the ruined abbey of Glastonbury. England furnished a safe asylum for the persecuted professors of the reformed faith, who transferred their arts and industries to a country where their religion might be cherished without molestation, or danger of bodily suffering. Elizabeth always encouraged such immigrants, and by

enforcing the rule that they should take English apprentices into their business, she gave a great and profitable impulse to English manufactures. To the refugees from the Low Countries, there were soon added a large number of French Protestants, the victims of the religious wars in France; and a century later, upon the Revocation of the Edict of Nantes in 1685, many more crossed the Channel, and settled down permanently in England. Among the various industries in which these Huguenots excelled was the manufacture of paper; and in this business the family of Fourdrinier occupied a leading position. One member of that family lies buried in the chancel of St. Mary's, the mother of two famous brothers, one of whom, John Henry Newman, will always be regarded in this place with profound veneration. Mrs. Newman lived for some years as a widow at Rose Hill, near Iffley, close by the chapelry of Littlemore, which formed part of her son's parish of St. Mary's, and her figure, in bas-relief, may be seen in Littlemore church, of which building she was the donor.

She died in 1836, and early on one May morning in that year her body was brought to St. Mary's, and interred in a brick grave at the extreme east end of the chancel, near the spot where Amy Dudley had been buried so long before. Just a few intimate friends joined the chief mourners at the grave; among them Dr. Pusey and his young wife, soon to be taken from him. The very homeliness and simplicity of the scene, as it has been described by one who was present, places it in sharp contrast with the cold splendour and pageantry of poor Lady Amy's desolate funeral; a little group of mourners in the almost empty church, listening in the quiet morning hour to the touching words of our burial office, instinct with the voice of comfort, thanksgiving, and triumphant hope.

Of Dr. Newman himself I will not attempt to speak at length. But there is no doubt that the Huguenot traditions of his mother's family exercised a very considerable influence over his mind, especially during his youth. It is said

that he chose 'St. Bartholomew's Eve' as the subject of his earliest poem. He was brought up at home in the diligent and constant study of the Bible, and of writers of Calvinistic tendencies. The works of Thomas Scott, Romaine, Milner, and Newton provided his groundwork in theology and church history. The essays and commentary of Scott—then living at Aston Sandford—impressed him most deeply; he refers to him as the writer 'to whom (humanly speaking) I almost owe my soul.' He was struck by Scott's 'bold unworldliness and vigorous independence of mind,' and by the minutely practical character of his writings. 'For years I used almost as proverbs what I considered to be the scope and issue of his doctrine, "Holiness before peace," and "Growth is the only evidence of life."' He was also taught the necessity of dogma as an essential element of personal faith. Besides these interesting effects of his early training, may we not venture to trace to Newman's descent on his mother's side some influences which helped unconsciously to mould the

delicate refinement and subtlety of his thought, and the perfect grace and clearness of his style, akin to the very noblest traditions of French literature?

SERMON VII

ROYAL VISITS TO ST. MARY'S

‘I will speak of thy testimonies also before kings, and will not be ashamed.—Ps. cxix. 46.

ROYAL visits to St. Mary's have not been many. Elizabeth was the only sovereign of the House of Tudor who entered the church, and she came on two occasions, in 1566 and 1592. The first king of the Stuart line was present at disputations here in 1605. At his second visit to Oxford, nine years afterwards, he did not come to St. Mary's, but two years later he issued a royal mandate, enjoining strict attendance on the part of the scholars at the university sermons. It is evident that in spite of the stringent regulations which had been made in the interests of the Puritan party during the later years of the Chancellorship of the Earl of Leicester, consider-

able laxity had again begun to prevail both as to the preaching of sermons and as to the attendance at them, for the king not only commands 'that all students do resort to the sermons at St. Mary's and be restrained from going to any other church in the time of St. Mary's sermons,' but adds 'that provision be made that the sermons at St. Mary's be diligently made and performed both morning and afternoon.' Charles I., during his long stay at Oxford after the battle of Edgehill, resided at Christ Church, but in those distracted days the University was almost dispersed, and no academical ceremonies attracted the king to St. Mary's, although sermons were ordered to be preached there before the two Houses of Parliament on every Sunday during the residence of the Court at Oxford. Once indeed during this period Prince Charles entered the church, to be incorporated as a master of Arts, a degree which he had already received at Cambridge. During his subsequent visits as King he did not attend St. Mary's, and no later visits of English sovereigns are recorded.

Great preparations were made for Elizabeth's first visit in 1566. Two years previously she had visited Cambridge, and a deputation of doctors had on that occasion been despatched from Oxford, to notice the observances and all the ceremonial which attended the entertainment of the queen. It was not likely that when the time came to welcome Elizabeth here, she would be received with less splendour than at the sister university. Nor had any slight been intended by her giving the priority, in point of time, to Cambridge. There had been a recent outbreak of the plague at Oxford, which would make it only wise to defer her visit; and it will be remembered that both Cecil and Parker were Cambridge men.

Of the proceedings at Oxford more than one contemporary account may still be read. A young Fellow of Exeter College, by name Bereblock, wrote a full narrative of the events in Latin; and he also provided the quaint illustrations of the buildings of Oxford, which were incorporated in the *Topographica Delineatio*, a

volume which Neale, the Regius Professor of Hebrew, presented to the Queen to serve as a sort of guide-book for her Majesty's information. The book was written in Latin elegiacs, and consisted of an imaginary conversation between the Queen and the Chancellor; the latter, in reply to the Queen's enquiries, giving information about each College in turn. Nicholas Robinson, then just appointed to the Bishopric of Bangor, who was in attendance among the courtiers, also wrote an interesting Latin account of what he witnessed.

The Queen arrived at Oxford from Woodstock on the afternoon of Saturday, August 31. On the previous day Leicester and Cecil and other noblemen from the royal retinue had personally inspected all the preparations for the visit; and Leicester, instead of returning with the rest to Woodstock, had remained in Oxford for the night, in order that he might be better able to act his part as Chancellor in the morrow's reception.

Elizabeth journeyed in a litter drawn by

mules; owing to a recent illness, her health would not allow her to ride on horseback, as she had done on entering Cambridge.

At Wolvercote, she was met by the university authorities, headed by the bedels with their staves, which were handed to the Queen, and given back by her to the Chancellor. Four doctors accompanied Leicester at his reception of the Queen. The first of them was Kennall, the Vice-Chancellor, who was a Canon of Christ Church, and in that dignified position was on an equal footing with the doctors who were Heads of Houses. The other three were Laurence Humphrey, President of Magdalen, the leader of the Protestant party in the university; Godwyn, lately made Dean of Christ Church in place of the puritan Sampson; and White, Warden of New College. They were all attired in their scarlet robes. Eight other Heads of Houses, who were not of the dignity of doctors, were also present.

Roger Marbeck, Provost of Oriel, who had been public orator in the previous year, delivered

a Latin speech; the doctors kissed the royal hand; and as Humphrey bowed low in so doing, the Queen, observing him clad in the richly coloured doctor's dress, rebuked him good-humouredly for his puritan scruples against the wearing of vestments: 'Doctor Humphrey,' she said, 'methinks this gown and habit becomes you very well: I marvel that you are so strait-laced on this point; but I come not now to chide.'

The procession moved on — the university authorities leading the way—till the north gate of the city was reached. It was the famous gate of Bocardo, grim with memories of the martyred bishops, but now bright with new white-wash and decked out with emblems. Here the civic authorities delivered up the city mace; the mayor made an oration in English, and at its close presented to the Queen a rich double-gilt cup worth ten pounds, containing about forty pounds in old gold. The thrifty Queen always loved such gifts. Once, when the mayor of Norwich presented her with a silver cup full of

gold pieces, adding *sunt hic centum libræ puri auri*, she could not restrain her eagerness. She took off the cover and looked inside, and then, with a smile of delight, handed it to one of her court with the injunction, 'Look to it: there is a hundred pounds.'

Oration followed oration as the Queen moved on from Bocardo to Christ Church. The scholars lined the streets, kneeling as the royal litter passed. On their behalf Robert Deal of New College delivered a Latin speech. At Carfax, Giles Laurence, Fellow of All Souls and Regius Professor of Greek, made an oration in Greek, and the Queen gracefully thanked him by a few words in the same learned language, adding that it was the best Greek speech she had ever heard. Bachelors and masters of Arts lined the street which leads down from Carfax to the great gate of Christ Church. There another oration was made by Kingsmill, the public orator, who had the bad taste to speak in eulogy of the puritan holder of the regius chair of divinity, and met with a sharp rejoinder from the Queen, 'You

would have done well, had you had good matter.' At Christ Church she descended from her litter and passed through the quadrangle to the Cathedral under a canopy borne by four doctors. On reaching the church she moved to a platform erected for her at the right side of the choir, and after a service of thanksgiving read by Dean Godwyn, and an anthem accompanied by cornets, she passed through the adjoining gardens to her lodgings at the deanery.

The next day was Sunday, and it was spent in comparative quiet. The Queen attended the afternoon service in Christ Church, but excused herself from witnessing the Latin play, *Marcus Geminus*, which was acted before the court in the evening in the college hall.

The precincts of the college had been lavishly decorated in honour of the royal guest; scrolls of verses in Greek and Latin were affixed to the walls; one of them forsook the common topics of eulogy, and pointedly called her attention to the unfinished condition of the buildings of the ample foundation which her father had

established in the magnificent home that Wolsey had begun :—

‘ Inclyta fœminei Virgo quæ gloria sexus,
Et generis decus et gentis regina Britannæ,
Grata venis nobis, perfectaue gaudia portas,
Imperfecta tui subiens monumenta parentis.’

And indeed much was needed to complete the fabric, for the whole of the north side of the great quadrangle was as yet unbuilt, and the gateway tower scarcely rose above the level of the adjoining roofs.

On Monday the Queen remained within the walls of Christ Church, and in the evening was present in the hall at the performance of an English play, *Palamon and Arcite*. While it was going on, a serious accident occurred by the entrance of the hall, through the fall of a barrier, three persons being killed and five injured. The Queen sent the Vice-Chancellor and her surgeons to see to the matter, but the play was not stopped, and she enjoyed the performance exceedingly.

On each of the next three days Elizabeth

attended St. Mary's, to hear academic disputations. She was keenly interested in all the proceedings, and spent four hours a day within the church. The Queen passed through the streets from Christ Church on foot. The doors and walls of the church were covered with laudatory verses in Greek and Latin and Hebrew. The arrangements of the interior are minutely described by Bereblock. The whole of the nave was fitted up with scaffolding, providing long rows of seats on the north and south. At the extreme east end, just by the entrance to the chancel, there was erected a lofty platform, on which was placed a throne for the Queen, covered with cloth of gold and other costly fabrics, and rich tapestries were hung around it. The nobles in attendance and the ladies of honour were grouped near her Majesty, and below were the places for the university dignitaries, and pulpits for the disputants. The seats of the doctors were raised above the others, and were nearer to the Queen; and to a special seat on her left, '*coccineo serico, triumphali more, operta,*'

Leicester, the young and gallant Chancellor, was conducted by the bedels.

It is not easy, in our modern days, to understand how any pleasure or even interest could have been excited by the disputations, which extended over three long and dreary days. The theses propounded were defended and opposed with all the traditional formalities of academical precedent. They dealt with questions of natural and moral philosophy, of physics, and civil law, and theology. In the last subject, Jewel acted as Moderator, and Laurence Humphrey supported two theses, difficult to discuss under any circumstances, and especially difficult before the particular audience gathered on this occasion in St. Mary's. The first was 'An obediendum sit principi malo?'; the second, 'An ministerium verbi sit dominatio?' They were both thorny questions; but so keenly interested was the Queen in the arguments advanced by the disputants on either side, that on this, the last day of the sessions, the ceremony was prolonged till the September sun was low in the heavens, and

it was necessary for lights to be introduced. Jewel at last, in a learned and judicious speech, summed up the points of discussion, and ended with some courteous words in praise of the Queen. Loud cries of 'Vivat Regina' resounded through the church; and her nobles, pressing round her, urged her to address the assembly. She pretended to hesitate. First she suggested that the Spanish ambassador, who was by her side, should speak for her. He wisely declined. Then Leicester was appealed to, and then Cecil. Both were courtiers enough to bow dissent. She at length rose up from her throne, 'and after giving back with a graceful presence,' began in a low voice a Latin speech. Her opening words, 'Qui male agit odit lucem,' contained a happy allusion to the growing darkness, which the lamps had partly dispersed, and to her own inability to speak appropriately amid so learned a company. She then referred in terms of high appreciation to what she had seen and heard; there was matter, no doubt, for praise and blame; but the praise was for her hearers, the blame for

herself. She had some knowledge, indeed, yet a very imperfect knowledge, of many languages; in spite of the excellence of her tutors, the soil on which they had worked was barren, and the fruit had been all too little. The praises to which she had listened had been abundant; but her own estimate of herself would not change. Her concluding words were the expression of a kindly wish, 'Votum meum hoc erit, ut me vivente sitis florentissimi, me mortua beatissimi.'

The assembly then broke up; the Queen's procession wended its way back in the dusk to Christ Church; and, untired by the long and arduous duties of three days of disputations, Elizabeth was not too fatigued to be present, after supper, in Christ Church hall, and to witness Calphill's most dreary tragedy of *Tereus and Progne*.

On the next day, Friday, September 6, the royal visit came to an end. The Queen left Oxford in the afternoon. As she issued from Christ Church, one of the students, Tobias Matthew, afterwards Dean of Christ Church

and Archbishop of York, delivered a Latin oration in bidding her farewell. The scholars thronged the streets as she passed up to Carfax and down the High Street to the east gate. By Magdalen College she took leave of the civic authorities; the university officials attended her to Shotover, and there Roger Marbeck spoke the last, as he had spoken the first, of the many orations which the Queen had endured. At its conclusion 'she gave him her hand to kiss, with many thanks to the whole university, speaking then these words (as 'tis reported) with her face towards Oxford. "Farewell the worthy university of Oxford; farewell my good subjects there; farewell my dear scholars; and pray God prosper your studies. Farewell, farewell!"'

Once more, in September 1592, Elizabeth came to Oxford, after a long interval of twenty-six years. She was then nearly sixty years of age, and in feeble health. Her old favourite Leicester had died four years previously at Cornbury, perhaps by poison, and the young

Earl of Essex had more or less taken his place in her regard. Cecil, now Lord Burghley, the Queen's senior by thirteen years, was still her trusted and sagacious counsellor. He was Chancellor of the university of Cambridge, but attended Elizabeth on this second, as he had on her first visit to Oxford, and it is to the pen of a Cambridge graduate who was a member of his suite that we owe a contemporary account of the proceedings. She was received with the same ceremony as on her former visit, but care was taken not to over-tire her by tedious engagements.

She was lodged again at Christ Church, where Dr. William James was now Dean, and she attended services in the Cathedral, and witnessed the acting of two comedies in the hall.

Three times she was present at disputations at St. Mary's, but the sessions were shortened, and she more than once expressed her weariness at the prolixity of the speakers. The church had been fitted up in the same fashion as

on the earlier visit, except that at the west end of the nave, opposite the royal throne, an open space was left that more air might circulate through the crowded assembly. A guard was also placed outside the church, armed with halberds, whose duty was to prevent any noise or knocking at the doors, which might disturb the Queen.

The visit extended over six days, from September 22 to 28. On her departure she again expressed her love for the place. 'Farewell, farewell, dear Oxford,' she exclaimed, as she viewed its towers and spires from the heights of Shotover, 'God bless thee, and increase thy sons in number, holiness, and virtue !'

The two royal visits which I have attempted to describe have an interest of their own, from more than one point of view. They serve as an illustration of some of the elements of the character of the most remarkable, perhaps the ablest of the sovereigns of England. We discern the great Queen's intense fondness for splendour and ceremony, and her more than

readiness to accept the utmost adulation which the loyal homage of her subjects would render. The fulsome words of flattery addressed to her in every formal oration, or expressed in the copies of verses which were flung broadcast in her way, must even in that age of elaborate diction have been regarded as excessive and unreal. The masques and plays and tedious poetry with which, when on her progresses, Elizabeth was always greeted, are recounted *ad nauseam* in the careful work of Nichols. But the Queen seems never to have tired of them, at least till old age came upon her, but always to have enjoyed them, to have accepted them as a natural expression of her subjects' regard, and to have used them as opportunities for displaying her own resourcefulness in speech or repartee, and her knowledge—her quite exceptional knowledge—of learned languages. Compared indeed with the revels and grotesque entertainments with which Elizabeth was welcomed when she visited some nobleman's seat or some loyal city, the reception

accorded at Oxford was grave and decorous and dull, befitting the dignity and sobriety of a venerable university. Oxford even avoided the strange incongruity which was permitted at Cambridge, where a Latin comedy, the *Aulularia* of Plautus, was acted before her Majesty in King's College chapel on Sunday evening, upon a stage hastily erected after she had attended evensong there.

But though Elizabeth accepted with delight the ceremonial observances which her subjects rendered, and listened to words of compliment and flattery with the vanity of a weak woman, there was a perpetual undercurrent of sadness beneath the flow of splendour and gaiety and wit. She was always a solitary figure. She stood quite alone, the last of Henry's children, with no dear kinsfolk on whom to bestow affection and confidence; without husband, brother, or sister; almost her only relatives the suspected rivals for her throne. She had wise and loyal counsellors, of whom she made the most; but she never trusted them implicitly,

or allowed them to solve for her the riddles, or share the heaviest burdens, of public policy. She stood apart from them all, in thoughts and aims and intrigues; a cold, scheming, but far-seeing woman, keeping certain great ends clearly in view, and not scrupulous in the choice of the means by which they might be attained. Her one persistent love was love of her country; and she was always faithful to the promise made at her coronation that she would be a good Queen to her people. England remembered the promise, and trusted her in spite of all her faults; and she never broke her word. Elizabeth—to use the quaint expression of Canon Dixon—‘was the only great man in her kingdom. She only had the divining eye in politics.’ And her people knew her greatness, and had confidence in the solitary figure that guided their destiny, though often by tortuous ways.

Occasionally there were bursts of softer feminine passion, disclosed in her behaviour towards her favourites; and sometimes cries of

almost indignation at her utter loneliness. There is a true pathos in her flood of tears when the messenger brought news of the birth of James, and her lamentable cry, 'The Queen of Scots is the mother of a fair son, and I am a barren stock.'

It is interesting to remember that those bitter words had broken forth from Elizabeth's lips only two months before her first visit to Oxford. Amid the splendour and engagements and amusements of that week of gaiety and merriment, it might well have been believed that there were no great cares of State pressing upon the Queen's mind, and overclouding her happiness. Yet it was a period of intense anxiety. In Scotland, Mary was now at the culminating point of her fortunes. She had conciliated the opposition of the Scotch Catholics by her marriage with Darnley just a year before; and Murray and his party had withdrawn for a time into England. She was at the head of the Catholic movement; and her marriage with Darnley made her claims to the

English succession stronger than before. Then, in March of this very year, had occurred the murder of Rizzio, and though Mary's vengeance on Darnley ultimately involved her fall, that vengeance had not yet been taken, and the birth of James on June 19 gave a clear prospect of an heir to the English throne if Mary's own rights were acknowledged: and, if only the Catholic forces maintained their strength and union, Elizabeth's position as Sovereign would soon be seriously threatened, and even her life would be in danger.

On the Continent the prospect was at this time full of uncertainty. In the religious wars in France Elizabeth had taken an ineffective part by giving some aid to the Huguenots, on the condition of the surrender of Le Havre into her hands; an inglorious episode in her reign. In the Netherlands the Protestant movement, destined to have such far-reaching consequences, had already begun, in fierce opposition to the bigoted policy of Philip; and the Queen might have already received news of the religious

riot which took place at Antwerp in this month of August, the prelude to disturbances in many other towns. There was a procession of a miraculous image of the Virgin, and as the ecclesiastics in all their pomp moved through the streets, the crowd assailed them with cries of 'Mayken, Mayken, your hour is come,' and from cries went on to violence, with wholesale destruction of images and statues, and the despoiling of churches.

Nor could Elizabeth have been at this time without anxiety in respect to matters of religion at home. She had adopted a policy which had not been pleasing to extreme men of either side, though under the judicious guidance of Parker the settlement had already been well accepted. There was a strong Roman party biding its time, ready for plots and schemes at any advantageous moment; and the Protestants were by no means satisfied with the Queen's attitude of studied moderation and compromise. They suspected her sincerity. If she was loyal to the reformed tenets, why, they asked, did she

still maintain, in her private chapel, the crucifix with lights burning before it? Why did she have three of her new Bishops officiating there, a priest, deacon, and sub-deacon, standing before the Holy Table, decked in vestments all of gold? and why did she permit the celebration of Holy Communion without a sermon?

Twenty-six eventful years passed, and when, in 1592, Elizabeth again visited Oxford, she could look back without misgivings as to the result of the policy which she had pursued. She was now more safe than ever in the affections of her subjects,—more safe than ever, though the succession was still undetermined, in the security of her throne. Mary had died on the scaffold, after nineteen years of imprisonment, and the many plots against the throne had been foiled. The mighty Catholic movement which had culminated in Philip's contemplated invasion of England had come to nothing; the invincible Armada had been scattered, and the peril had passed. And England, conscious of its strength and no longer in alarm at the Spanish

designs, had risen to a conception of national unity and influence such as it had never known before. In the enterprise and daring of its seamen there had been revealed a new element of national greatness, which had diffused a spirit of pride and confidence among the whole people, and had made England a power to be reckoned with throughout Europe. And as England rose Spain declined, and the vast empire which Philip had inherited was dwindling in extent and becoming crippled in resources. In 1581 the seven provinces of the Low Countries had formally renounced their allegiance to Spain; and Parma died in the year of 1592, leaving his task in the other provinces of the Netherlands still unfinished. In the same year Philip's great general, Alessandro Farnese, died, frustrating his designs against France; in the next year the acceptance by Henry of Navarre of the Catholic faith gave the final blow to his schemes in that country. At home, Elizabeth saw peace and tranquillity reign, except in disaffected Ireland; and though more solitary than ever, and stung

by many a poignant memory, her declining years had many rich solaces, and her policy had won its many rich rewards.

The name of Elizabeth occurs in the list of the public benefactors of the university, which is recited in our Bidding Prayer on certain days in each year. It was placed in that list immediately after her death, by a formal vote of Convocation. Yet it is not easy to discover the special debt which Oxford, as a university, owes to her. She expressed indeed delight and gratitude at the conclusion of each of her visits, and bade farewell with many warm expressions of her affection for the university, and her desire to see it thrive in every respect. But her goodwill ended with her words. She did nothing to advance its learning. She established no professorships; she endowed no institutions. She was only in name the foundress of Jesus College. She left Christ Church as unfinished as she found it, only imposing upon its rulers the obligation, which they accepted with reluctance, of annually electing lads from her foundation

at Westminster to studentships of their House. Her Primates were all Cambridge men; and as for the Diocese, which her father had so lately created, she cared for its revenues more than its prosperity. The see of Oxford was vacant during almost the whole of her reign, and its estates were enjoyed by the Crown.

Yet Oxford doubtless shared with the rest of England the feeling of pride in the august and splendid Sovereign, under whose guidance State and Church had weathered so many storms and had prospered so greatly. The insertion of her name among our public benefactors should be regarded as the deliberate expression of the gratitude of a home of learning and religion for conspicuous services rendered to a whole nation during the long period of nearly half a century, rather than for special acts of liberality or patronage extended to the university. And indeed Oxford has owed its richest endowments, as it has owed its most enlightened and most religious aims, not to the favour of crowned

heads, but to the far-seeing wisdom and piety of divines, and statesmen, and untitled lovers of learning, who have been the chief bestowers of the magnificent inheritance which it is our privilege to enjoy, and our duty to hand on, unimpaired, to those who will come after us.

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